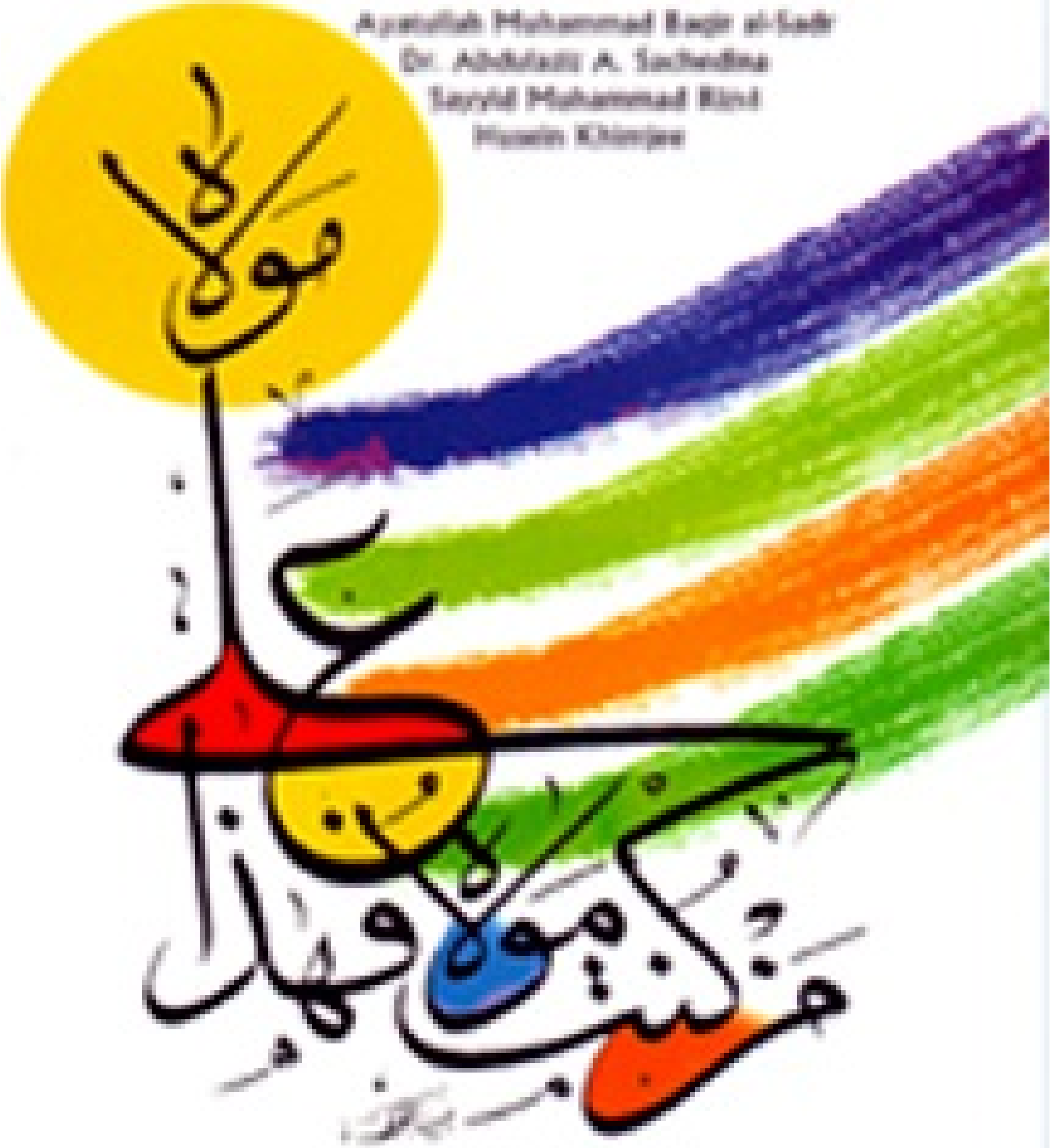
GHADIR

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Introduction

The caravan returning from the Hujjatul- Widdah (the Final Pilgrimage) of the Prophet .Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, was halted unexpectedly

The archangel Jibreel (Gabriel) had come with the message from Allah: '٠ Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people' (Qur'an ۵:۶٧). The place where the Muslims had stopped was at Ghadir Khum. The Prophet delivered a sermon .and appointed Imam Ali, peace be upon him, as his successor

His words were: '٠ Muslims! Who is more worthy [in the eyes of] the believers than their ownselves?' The audience replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know better.' Hearing this,

the Prophet declared: 'I am the Master (Mawla) of the faithful and I have rights over them even more than what they have over themselves. Therefore of whomever I am the Mawla, (this) Ali is his Mawla.'The first to congratulate Imam Ali was Umar ibn al-Khattab who said: 'Excellent! How fortunate you are ، Abul Hasan! Now you have become my master as well as of all the Muslims.'This all happened ۱,۴۰۰ years ago.

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But alas! The events following the death of the Prophet took a different turn and Imam Ali was by-passed as the mawla or the leader of the Muslims. Various reasons have been :given for this, including

By mawla the Prophet meant 'friend.' It is difficult to accept this. Would the Prophet .۱ have stopped the whole caravan to declare his friendship with Imam Ali and to make ?friendship to Imam Ali obligatory

The Prophet did not appoint anyone and expected the Ummah to make a decision for .۲ .itself

How can this be? Did the person who foresaw the fall of Khusrow and Caesar not see the plight of his Ummah after he was gone and not appoint a successor? And what of the occasions when he said: 'Whoever helps me today will be my successor' and 'Tomorrow I will give the standard of the army to the one who will be my successor'? There is far too much evidence to show that the Prophet did indeed appoint his successor. However, .history took its own course and what happened cannot be undone now

As a result, we have two major schools of thought - Sunnis and Shi'as. The followers of .the two schools of thought are Muslims and this cannot be denied or challenged

The ways and means of Co-existence have to be identified. There has to be a healthy discussion between the two schools of thought with a view to increasing understanding between them. The declaration of kufr does not help the cause of understanding. The Muslims have far too many enemies. let us make sure that our enemies do not use our differences, such as they are, to thwart our unity. The event of Ghadir has to be looked at from a positive perspective. Ghadir should provide a means of uniting the Muslim Ummah and teach us lessons in leadership which are essential if Muslims are to once again .achieve the position of eminence

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Let the Eid of Ghadir, that we so enthusiastically celebrate the world over, be our pivot towards Islamic unity and leadership. Let our Sunni brethren present their viewpoints .keeping in mind the two principles of Islamic unity and leadership

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Abdulaziz Sachedina, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi and Brother HuseinKhimjee for their contributions. We would also like to thank Al-Tawhid Institute for allowing us to reprint the translation of A Study on the .Question of AI-Wllaya by As-Shahid AyatullahMuhammad Baqir al-Sadr

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Chapter ١

About the Author

Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr was a well-known and widely respected figure throughout the Muslim world. His twinbooks Falsafatuna (Our Philosophy) and Iqtasaduna (OurEconomics) have been widely acclaimed as masterpieces inbridging the gap between Islamic tradition and contemporary Muslim intellectuals. He also wrote on Al- Usul al-Mantiquiyahli-l Istiqra' (The Logical Foundations of Induction), Al-Bankal-Laribawi (Towards a Non-Usurious Islamic Bank), AI-insanal-Mu'asir wa-al Mushkilah al-Ijtima'iyah (Contemporary Manand Social Problems) and many other original works. His popularity was obviously unpalatable to the satanic Takriticlique in Iraq and both he and his numerous followers werecontinually harassed. He had been under intermittent housearrest since he declared his open support for the Islamic Movement in Iran and expressed the hope of bringing about asimilar change in Iraq. Many of his close followers have beenexecuted.Ayatullah al-Sadr, who was martyred in April ١٩٨٠ with his sister Bint al-Ruda by the tyrant Saddam Takriti, raised the banner of opposition to the regime in the glorious tradition of his predecessors going back to Imam Husayn, upon whom bepeace,

.and took up the struggle in the Name of Allah, the Annihilator of Tyrants

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A study on the Question of Al_Wilaya

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful the Compassionate

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers and peace be upon Muhammad and his Family (Ahl al-Bayt). Some modern scholars view Shi'ism as an accidental manifestationin Islamic society, and see the Shi'a as a part of the main chorus of the Islamic community; a result of the events which took place with the passing of time and of specific social developments, which in turn led to the formation of a special sectarian attitude within this larger body, and then gradually expanded into a sect. Having assumed this fact, these scholars disagree as to the actual events and developments which led to the growth of this manifestation and to the birth of this sect. Some assume that the supposed political activities of 'Abd Allah ibn Saba' formed the basis for the formation of the Shi'a. Others, however, attribute the appearance of Shi'ism to the khilafah of Imam Ali, prayers and peace be upon him, and to the political and social position which was .established during that era, according to the events which took place

While others assume that the appearance of the Shi'a was hidden in events which occurred later than this in the historical process of Islamic society. What has encouraged many of these scholars to the assumption and the belief that Shi'ism was an accidental manifestation in Islamic society is, in my opinion, the fact that the Shi'a in the early times only constituted a small part of the whole Islamic community. This fact has given them the impression that non-Shi'ism was the original foundation of Islamic society, and that Shi'ism was an accidental and exceptional manifestation, whose causes must lie in the development of the parties opposed to the situation of the day. However, it is hardly logical to define principles or exceptions,or bases and deviations, according to largeness or comparative fewness of numbers, and it is erroneous to consider non-Shi'ism as the basis according to its large numbers, and to consider Shi'ism as a deviant, accidental manifestation because this disagrees with the fundamental nature of doctrinal divisions. We have often found a particular doctrinal division within the development of a single religion founded upon the basis of some difference in the definition of the tenets of that religion without there being two equal doctrinal divisions according to numbers. Yet they may be equal according to their purity of origin and equally expressive of the religion, while differing as regards to its basic character. Thus it is not in any way permissible for

us to construct our conceptions of the internal doctrinal divisions within Islam, of the Shi'a and others, according to numerical strength. Similarly, it is not permissible for us to link the birth of the Shi'a presentation of Islam in the development of Islam with the birth of the word 'Shi'a' or 'Shi'ism' (al-Tashayyu') as a technical term or special name for a clearly defined group of Muslims; for the birth of technical terms is one matter and the growth of conventions and presentations is quite another. Even if we did not find the word 'Shi'a' in the normal language used during the lifetime of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family and grant him peace, or after his death, this would not mean that the Shi'a presentation of Islam and its attitudes did not exist. It is in this spirit that we must deal with the question of Shi'ism (al-Tashayyu') and the Shi'a, and answer the two following :questions

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?a) How did Shi'ism come into existence

?b) How did the Shi'a appear

How Shi'ism came into existence

As for the first question, we can regard Shi'ism as a natural consequence of Islam, and as a representation of the presentation of Islam which it was obliged to attain if it was to protect its healthy growth. We can in fact infer a logical inference to this presentation of Islam from the faith which the Prophet commanded, according to the nature of its .formation and the conditions which surrounded it

The Prophet was assuming the leadership of a revolutionary faith, and inducing radical transformations of the customs, structures and concepts of society. The path for such a task of transformation was obviously not a short one, but was rather long and protracted because of the vast spiritual divisions between jahiliyyah and Islam. The faith which the Prophet practiced had to begin with the jahili man and raise him to new institutions, thus converting him into an Islamic man who could carry the new light, and uproot the trunk .and roots of jahiliyyah from his heart and mind

And the Great Leader made astonishing headway in the task of transformation in a very short time, but it was necessary for thistask of transformation to continue on its way even after the death of the Prophet, who knew that his death was near sometime before it actually occurred and he disclosed this openly in 'The Pilgrimage of Farewell' (Hujjat al-Wada); so his death was not unexpected. This means that he had ample time to contemplate the future of the faith after his demise, even if we disregard the factors of contact with the Unseen and the divine protection for Islam stemming from revelation. In light of this we can see that the Prophet had three possible paths before him to ensure .the proper consequences of the future of the faith

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The First Path

The First Path

The first path would have been to adopt a passive attitude towards the future, and to be content with the part which he had played in leading and directing the da'wah during his lifetime, leaving its future to circumstance and chance. It is of course unthinkable to attribute such passivity to the Prophet because it grows from two different possibilities, neither of which can be levelled against the Prophet. The first possibility is the belief that such passivity and disregard would have no effect upon the future of the da'wah, and that the Ummah which would follow his da'wah would be capable of acting independently in a manner which would protect the da'wah and ensure it against deviation. But this belief is totally indefensible, and indeed the essential nature of things would seem to indicate the opposite, because the da'wah was by its very nature a radical and transformatory factor, which aimed at building a new community from which all jahili principles would be removed. It was, however, also prone to dangerous possibilities when deprived of its leader and of all guidance. And such perils were sure to arise if no allowances were made for the vacuum left by the Prophet's death, which would leave the Ummah without any guidance, and from the subsequent needs of the Ummah to adopt an extemporaneous attitude in the shadow of the massive difficulties posed by the death of the Prophet. Had the Prophet left the Ummah without any guidance regarding the development of Islam, it would have had to face the problem of conducting itself without its leader while facing the most dangerous issues ever to confront Islam without possessing any prior experience there of. Such a state of affairs would also have required that the Ummah adopt an immediate policy as to how to conduct itself in spite of the danger posed by the problem, .because the vacuum could not be allowed to continue

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And this speedily-arranged policy would have had to be instituted just when the Ummah was suffering the staggering shock of losing its Great Leader. This shock must obviously have shaken the foundations of logical thought and exacerbated any disorders, and it was perhaps this shock that forced one of the Sahaba to announce that the Prophet had .not died and would not die

These are the dangers which might have arisen from any religious immaturity on the part of the sahaba, who had not yet attained the standard at which the Prophet could feel satisfied, of a reasonable reaction to the khilafah after his death, within the religious framework of Islam, and of their ability to overcome the hidden contradictions which existed, and continued to exist, in the minds of the Muslims, regarding their divisions into the Muhajirun and Ansar, Quraysh and the rest of the Arab tribes of Makkah and Medina. There are also the dangers which arose from the existence of anonymous factions within the Ummah who acted treacherously from the time of the Prophet onwards. This is the .(faction which the Qur'an calls the munafiqun (hypocrites

When we add to them the large numbers who converted to Islam after the conquests, becoming Muslims for material gains and not out of spiritual awakening, we can begin to assess the danger posed by these groups, who would find a chance to grow and expand in the vast vacuum which would result from the absence of the guiding leadership. Obviously the acceptance of such a perilous position after his death could not be envisaged by any ideological leader, let alone by the Seal of the Prophets. Indeed Abu Bakr was loathe to leave the arena without ensuring a positive future for the government by the appointment of one who could fully comprehend and control its affairs... Similarly, the people rushed to Umar when he was struck down saying: '۰ Leader of the Faithful, if you would only set out a covenant," (۱) fearing the vacuum of authority which the khalifah would leave behind him, in spite of the political and social concentration which .the da'wah had attained during the ۱۰ years following the death of the Prophet

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And Umar designated six people to calm their fears. Umar recognized the extent of the danger posed by the circumstances of as-Saqifa, and the possible complications which might have arisen from the improvised nature of the khilafah of Abu Bakr, when he said: 'The appointment (ba'yah) of Abu Bakr would have been a fatal mistake had Allah not (protected us from its evil.' (٢

Abu Bakr himself regretted the speed with which he had accepted authority and taken over its difficult problems, although he had sensed the danger of the situation and the necessity for a quick solution, when he said, when blamed for accepting the authority: 'Indeed the Messenger of Allah had died and the people had only just emerged from .jahiliyyah

So I feared that they would be subject to temptations, and my associates encouraged me therein.' (٣) if all this is true then it must also be evident that the Pioneer and the Prophet of Islam felt the danger of a negative attitude more acutely, and understood the exact nature of the situation and needs of the task of radical transformation, which he had instigated in the Ummah so newly emerged from jahiliyyah,more profoundly than Abu .Bakr

The second possibility which could explain the passivity of the Leader towards the future and progress of Islam after his death is that he did not seek to protect Islam from this peril, although aware of the great danger posed by such a stance, because he viewed Islam advantageously and was only interested inprotecting it during his lifetime, so that he could receive benefits and gains from it while uninvolved in its future protection afterhis death. This explanation is unthinkable in the case of the Prophet, oreven if we do not regard him as a Prophet, closely involved withAllah, May He be Praised and Exalted, in every aspect of Islam,and simply consider him as a leader passionately committed to his .cause similar to any other

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We cannot cite any example of a totally devoted leader who sacrificed himself in the interests of Islam as did the Prophet until the last moment of his life. In fact his whole career proves this point, and even when on his death bed and suffering greatly from his illness he was deeply concerned with a campaign which he had planned, and the force which he had dispatched under Usama, and ordered them saying: 'Stand ready with Usama's forces! Convoke the forces of Usama! Send out Usama's contingents!' He (repeated this although losing consciousness from time to time.(۴

For indeed the concern of the Prophet regarding this military campaign alone was so profound that he expended all his efforts upon it even on his deathbed, and although he knew that he would die before he could reap the rewards of this campaign, he did not .allow this to interfere with his task even until his last breath

So how can we even consider the opinion that the Prophet was neither preoccupied with the future of Islam, nor planning against the expected dangers which would confront its safety after his death? Finally, during the lifetime of the Prophet there is one act which is itself sufficient to negate the first assumption, while also proving that the Prophet was by no means passive towards the future of Islam, nor unaware of the dangers therein or unconcerned thereby. Furthermore, this act has been related in the authentic works of .both the Sunni and Shi'a Muslims

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It is that Umar al-Khattab was amongst a group of men in the house when the Prophet, who was about to die, said: 'Bring me parchment and pen so that I may write something (for you after which you shall never go astray.'(۵

In fact this act of the Prophet, which is generally viewed as authentic, illustrates clearly that he was deeply concerned about the dangers which had to be faced in the future, and recognized the need to plan ahead so as to protect the Ummah from deviation, and save it from inattentiveness and disintegration. It is thus totally impossible to substantiate any .claim of passivity levelled against the Prophet

Notes

۱- Tarikh al-Tabari, ۵/۲۶.

۲- Sharh al-Nahj of Ibn Hadid, ۶/۴۶.

۳- Tarikh al-Tabari, ۳/۲۰.

۴- Tarikh al-Kamil of Ibn Athir and others.

۵ - Musnad Ahmad, ۱/۳۰۰; Sahih Muslim, vol ۲, at the end of Al-Wasaya;and Sahih Al-Bokhari, vol ۱, Kitab as-Salh.

The Second Path

The Second Path

The second path is that the Prophet adopted a positive policy concerning the future of Islam after his death and planned towards it by advocating the appointment of a shura (counsel) which would be responsible for the affairs of Islam and leading the Ummah. This shura would be composed of the first generation of the faithful, the Muhajirun and the Ansar, who would represent the Ummah, while formulating the foundations for the future government and for the leadership of Islam as it evolved further. It is obvious, however, that the nature of things and the actual events which took place concerning the Prophet, the da'wah and the faithful refute this hypothes is and disprove the claim that the Prophet followed this method and sought to invest the leadership of Islam immediately after his death to the Ummah as represented in a shura composed of the initial generation of the

:Muhajirun and the Ansar. We shall now examine some of the points which clarify this

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Point one

Had the Prophet adopted a positive attitude towards the future of the da'wah and (١) intended that a shura be set up immediately after his death and that the leadership of the da'wah be handed over to someone elected according to this principle, he would have found it absolutely necessary to educate the Ummah and the faithful concerning the principles of shura with its rules and details, and to give it a form which reflected the divine and holy sanction, while also preparing the Islamic society both mentally and spiritually to accept this system. This would have been vital because the Islamic society grew from a confederacy of clans which had not functioned according to the political principles of shura before Islam, but had in fact generally functioned according to tribal leadership, in which power, wealth and the principles of inheritance had a large part to .play

We can easily discover that the Prophet did not seek to educate his followers concerning the principles, legal details and theoretical concepts of shura, because such a policy, had it been carried out, would surely have been reflected and embodied in the ahadith transmitted from the Prophet, or in the mentality of the Ummah, at least as far as the earliest generation is concerned-- the Muhajirun and the Ansar -- who would have been obliged to implement the organization of the shura. We do not, however, find any clearly defined legal evidence from the organization of a shura in the prophetical ahadith. As for the mentality of the Ummah or of the earliest generation there of we can find no .discernible reflection of any attempt to educate them to accept this

Indeed this generation subscribed to two different trends: the first is led by the Ahl al-Bayt (the People of the House of the Prophet), while the other is exemplified by those present at as-Saqifa and the khalifah who only arose after the death of the Prophet. The first trend was composed of those who believed in the Wisaya and Imama, and there is no reflection of any belief in the concept of shura amongst them. As for those who subscribed to the second trend, all the proofs and arguments which occurred during their lifetime and during their careers undoubtedly indicate that they neither believed in shura nor established their careers according to it, and the same is true of the rest of the groups who were alive at the time of the Prophet's death. The following narrative proves this: when Abu Bakr's illness became acute he appointed Umar ibn al-Khattab and ordered Uthman to write down the pledge. So he wrote: 'In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is the pledge of Abu Bakr, the khalifah of the Messenger of Allah, to the believers and Muslims. Peace be upon you, and I extol Allah to you. I hereby appoint Umar ibn al-Khattab as your liege. So hear and obey!' Then 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf came to him and said: 'How are you this morning, • khalifah of the Prophet of Allah?' So he replied: 'I am dying, and you have aggravated my condition because I appointed one of you and you have all become upset, as you all aspire to this office yourselves!' (۶)

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It is clear from the appointment of this khalifah and from the disapproval of the opposition that Abu Bakr did not consider the establishment of a shura but believed that he had the right to stipulate the next khalifah and that this situation obliged obedience on the part of the Muslims. For this reason he ordered them to hear and obey, and did not simply nominate Umar, but obliged them to accept his stipulation. We should also point out that Umar himself believed that he had the right to appoint a khalifah to rule over the Muslims, and appointed a group of six people and charged them with choosing his successor from amongst themselves, without any reference to the rights of the rest of the Muslims in this election. Thus the rationale of the function of a shura was not exemplified in Umar's appointment of a khalifah to succeed him, just as it had not been exemplified in the method employed by the first khalifah. Indeed, when the people asked Umar about the appointment of the next khalifah, he said: 'If one of two men were still alive I would charge him with the khalifah, and they are Salim the freed slave of Abu Hudhayfa, and Abu Ubaydaal-Jarrah. For if Salim was still alive I would not have designated a shura.' (٧)

Also Abu Bakr told 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Awf, while conversing with him on his deathbed: 'I wish I had asked the Prophet of Allah about the appointment of a successor so that nobody could have contested it.' (٨)

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Furthermore one of those present when the Ansar assembled at as-Saqifa to appoint Sa'd ibn Ubada, said: 'If the Muhajirun from Quraysh disagree they Will say, "We are the Muhajirun and we are his clan and his partisans." But some of the Ansar said,"So we shall say, "We shall have a khalifah and you shall have a khalifah. For we will never be content with anything other than this! "'When Abu Bakr spoke to them he said: 'We are the Muslims and the Muahjirun who were the first to adopt Islam, and for this reason the people must follow us, because we are the clan of the Prophet of Allah and of pure Arab lineage. 'And when the Ansar suggested that the khalifah should alternate between the Muhajirun and the Ansar, Abu Bakr rejected it, saying: 'When the Prophet of Allah came to the Arabs they found it difficult to leave the religion of their forefathers and differed and disagreed with him, then Allah chose the first Muhajirun to believe in him from his people, and they became the first to worship Allah in this world, and were his partisans and kinsfolk, who have the most right to rule after him, whichwould only be disputed by the unjust. 'But Al-Habbab ibn al-Mundhir, who encouraged the people in their determination, said: 'Stand firmly in support of your claim, for these people are under your care and protection, and if they refuse we shall have a khalifah and they shall have one! 'So Umar replied and said: 'Impossible! Two swords cannot besheathed in one scabbard. So only the false claimant, the deviant, or someone willing to risk his own destruction would dispute with us concerning the rule of Muhammad and his legacy, for we are his partisans and his clan.' (۹)

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If we wish to scrutinize this point we must take into consideration the method of appointment used by the first and second khulafah; the fact that this method was not rejected; the prevalent atmosphere which surrounded the opposing factions of the leading personalities of the Muhajirun and the Ansar on the day of as-Saqifa; the obvious inclinations of the Muhajirun in deciding that the authority should rest with them and not with the Ansar; the emphasis which they placed upon the principle of inheritance which gave the clan of the Prophet the most right to succession; the willingness of many of the Ansar to accept the idea of two khulafah - one of whom would be from the Ansar; who won the khilafan on that day; and that he regretted not having asked the Prophet about .his successor

In fact all this proves, without a shade of doubt, that this first generation of the Islamic Ummah, which also included those who came to power after the death of the Prophet, did not give any thought to the concept of shura as regards the appointment of the khilafah nor did they possess a clearly defined understandingof its principles; so how can we believe that the Prophet had instituted a policy of educating his followers concerning the legal and theoretical concepts of shura, to prepare the Muhajirunand the Ansar to submit the leadership of Islam to one elected according to these principles, when we cannot find any actual implementation of this method, or clear understanding there of, amongst this !generation

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Similarly, we cannot believe that the Prophet set down this method and its details legally and theoretically, but did not attempt to familiarize and educate the Muslims in this respect. This in fact proves the a forementioned theory that the Prophet did not present the principle of shura to the Ummah as an alternative to more traditional methods, because it is improbable that such a principle could have been presented and then disappeared completely from the reports of all sections of this society. Other obvious :points which further illustrate this are as follows

a) The principle of shura was a new one for this area, which had not experienced any sort of highly developed government before the time of the Prophet, and thus required .extensive education to acquaint its inhabitants as to its exact nature

b) The shura as a concept was unclear and could not be presented or put into action without its details, rules, and guidelines for preference in the case of dispute being clarified. Moreover, should these guidelines be based upon numbers and quantities, or upon qualities and experience, or upon other attributes which would facilitate the clarification of the concept and render it immediately functional upon the death of ?theProphet

c) In fact shura was an expression of the Ummah's implementationof authority according to consultation and the determination of the people concerning their government. The responsibility for this lay with all those who were involved in shura. If this shura was legally acceptable and to be put into practice immediately after the death of the Prophet, the majority of the people should have been previously instructed concerning it, so that each could adopt a positive attitude towards shura and bear his share of the responsibility. All these points prove that the Prophet had he wished that a shura be set up to choose a successor after his death, would have had to disseminate the concept of shura on a wide and profound scale to prepare his followers psychologically and to fill any gaps in their understanding, while also explaining the details which would make it a workable concept. The presentation of this concept on this level and wide scale could not have been carried out by the Prophet and then disappear totally from the minds of all the .Muslims who were alive at the time of the Prophet's death

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There is of course the possibility that the Prophet did in fact present the concept of shura to its best advantage and on the scale which circumstances required so that the Muslims understood its nature, but that political motivations led to its suppression so that the Muslims felt forced to hide what the Prophet had already taught them about the rules and details of shura. This theory is, however, impracticable because whatever may be claimed about them, these motives could not have influenced the ordinary Muslims from among the Sahaba who did not participate in the political events which took place immediately after the death of the Prophet, or play an important role in the gathering at as-Saqifa, but were rather on-lookers; for such people represent a large percentage of .every society irrespective of the political forces therein

If the concept of shura had been presented by the Prophet according to the requirements of the society this would not have been strictly for the ears of those who had political motives, because many people would have heard about it and it would naturally have been reflected in the actions of the ordinary members of the Sahaba, just as the prophetical ahadith concerning the merits of Imam Ali and his designations were actually reflected in the attitude of the sahaba themselves. Also why did these political motives not prevent the ahadith concerning the merits of Imam Ali, his designation and his rights to the leadership from being handed down to us through the Sahaba of the Prophet, in spite of the fact that these contradicted the prevalent attitudes of the time, when we possess no reports concerning the concept of shura? In fact even those whore presented these prevalent attitudes often found themselves in disagreement concerning political affairs, and would have found it advantageous to uphold the idea of a shura in opposition to the other faction. Yet none of these factions used this idea as a precept which they had heard from the Prophet. An example of this can be found in the position adopted byTalha concerning Abu Bakr's appointment of Umar, and in his denial of and obvious anger against this appointment, because,in spite of his rejection, he did not seek to countermand this appointment by calling for a shura, or to condemn Abu Bakr for departing from the teachings of the Prophet concerning shura and the election of a .successor

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Point two

It is also clear that had the Prophet decided to entrust the first generation of Muslims, which included the Muhajirun and the Ansar who were his contemporaries, with the guarding of Islam after his death and with the responsibility for the continuation of the task of transformation, he would have been obliged to prepare this generation with an extensive ideological and intellectual project so that they could grasp the concept firmly and practice it according to their awareness thereof, and could find solutions to the .problems with which Islam would be continually confronted

This is specially true when we consider that the Prophet, who foretold the fall of Khusrow and Caesar,knew that Islam was destined to win many victories, and that the Islamic Ummah would, in the near future, include newnations and cover a large area and would thus face the responsibility of proselytizing Islam to these nations and protecting the Ummah from the negative consequences of such expansion, while also applying the legal rules upon the conquered lands and their inhabitants.In spite of the fact that the first generation of Muslims was the purest ever to embrace Islam and the most prepared to sacrifice for it, we cannot detect any indication of the specialized preparation required to assume the guardianship of the faith,nor of wide and profound instructions concerning its .exact nature

In fact the factors which illustrate this point are so numerous that it is impossible to study them in this particular work.We can, however, point out in relation to this that the number of texts which are reported from the Prophet by the sahaba in the sphere of legislation only amounts to a few hundred a hadith, while there were about ۱۲,۰۰۰ sahaba according to the history books. Furthermore, the Prophet lived in a town with thousands of them and prayed with them in the same masjid morning and evening, so why can we not find some indication of specialized preparation amongst these people?It is well-known that the sahaba refrained from asking the Prophet questions to the extent that all of them would wait until a bedouin came from outside Medina to ask a question and then listen to the Prophet's reply, because they considered a question unnecessary if it concerned something that had not yet taken place.For this reason Umar once announced from the minbar: 'ByAllah, man is forbidden to ask questions concerning what has never existed, (for indeed the Prophet clarified what is in existence.' (۱۰

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And he added: 'It is not permissible for one to ask questions about what has never existed, for Allah has given His judgement upon all things that exist.' Also a man came to Umar's son one day and asked him about something and Umar 's son told him: 'Do not ask about what has never existed for I have heard Umar cursing one who asks regarding (what has never happened.' (١١

There was also a man who asked Ubayy ibnKa'b about a problem and he said: '٠ my son, does this affair which you asked me about exist?' He replied: 'No.' So the former said: 'If (that is the case, leave this question until it does exist.' (١٢

One day Umar was reading the Qur'an and came to the ayah:'And We caused to grow therein seeds, vines, herbs, olive trees,palms and gardens (which were) profuse, fruitful (and verdant(abban).' (١٣

So someone said: 'We know all of this, but what is (abban)?' Then Umar said: 'This, in the Name of Allah, is an irrelevant question, and it is not important whether you know the meaning of abban or not. Follow what is clear in the Book and practice it, and leave what .'you do not know to Allah

We can thus discern that the sahaba tended to desist from questions other than those concerning clearly defined and existent problems. It was in fact this tendency that led to the scarcity of legislative texts reported on the authority of the Prophet and later necessitated the consultation of sources other than the Qur'an and the Sunnah, such as legal discretion (istihsan) and analogy (qiyas), and the other features of independent judgement (ijtihad) which combine to form the personal interpretation of the mujtahid, which can allow the man's personality, his tastes and his personal understanding to enter .into the legislative act

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Such a tendency is, of course, diametrically opposed to the process of personal and ideological preparation which wouldhave required the extensive education of this generation, while also requiring that they be acquainted with the legal stipulations .concerning the problems which they would face when involved in the leadership

Just as the Sahaba refrained from asking questions to the Prophet they also chose not to record his ahadith in writing, inspite of the fact that the ahadith constituted the second Islamic source and that this was the only way to preserve it and prevent distortion. Indeed, Al-Hirawi expressed openly his disparagement of the oral tradition on the authority of Yahya ibn Sa'id from 'Abd Allah ibn ad-Dinar, saying that neither the sahaba nor the next generation wrote down the ahadith but transmitted them orally and learnt them by heart, except for the book about the alms tax (kitab as-sadaqat). In fact, according to the Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd, the second khalifah thought regarding the best position to adopt concerning the Sunnah of the Prophet for a whole month, but finally announced his prohibition of the documentation thereof. Thus the Sunnah of the Prophet, which was the most important Islamic source after Al-Qur'an al-Karim,was destined to suffer arbitrarily from forgetfulness, distortion and the death of those who had learnt the .traditions by heart(huffaz) for nearly ١٥٠ years

The only exceptions to this were the Ahl al-Bayt who applied themselves to the documented recording of ahadith from the earliest period, and we know from the numerous ahadith reported on the authority of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt that they possess a weighty book which had been dictated by the Prophet of Allah and written by .the hand of Ali ibn Abi Talib,and which included all the Sunnah of the Prophet of Allah

p: ٢٠

Do you, by Allah, believe that this naive group of people -- if they were in fact naive -- who refrained from asking questions about matters which had not yet occurred and forbade the documentation of the Sunnah of the Prophet after he had pronounced it were capable of guiding the new religion or of leading it through the most important and difficult stages of its long history? Or do you, by Allah, believe that the Prophet left his Sunnah to posterity without ensuring its organization and documentation, although he had commanded his followers to practice it? Furthermore, had he really arranged for the concept of a shua, would it not have been necessary to delineate its rules and to organize his Sunnah, so that the shura could progress according to a definite program in which personal desires would have no part to play? Or is it that the only rationalinterpretation of this is that the Prophet had prepared Imam Ali to assume the leadership after his death ?and entrusted him with his complete Sunnah and taught him ۱,۰۰۰ types of knowledge

In fact, the events which took place after the death of the Prophet proved that the Muhajirun and the Ansar had not received any sort of instruction concerning many of the momentous problems which the da'wah had to face after the time of the Prophet so that neither the khalifah nor the central government who supported him had a clear idea as to how the lands won by the Islamic conquests should be dealt with according to the Shari'ah, whether these lands should be divided amongst the fighting forces or should be regarded as endowments(auqaf) for the good of all Muslims. For it is surely inconceivable that the Prophet assured the Muslims that they would conquer the lands of Khusrow and Caesar and intended that the Muhajirun and the Ansar should lead the da'wah and handle the problems arising from these victories when he did not acquaint them with the legal premises which were necessary to control the large proportion of the world which was to .come under Islamic rule

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Indeed we can go even further and illustrate that the generation which was contemporary to the Prophet did not even possess a clearly defined picture of the religious matters which the Prophet had practiced hundreds of times within the sight and .hearing of the sahaba

A good example of this is the case of the prayers said over a dead man (salat aI-mayyit), a practice which the Prophet had carried out publicly on hundreds of occasions, performing it as one of the funeral cortege with the funeral escort and those who offered up prayers. Yet in spite of this, it appears that the sahaba did not consider it necessary to note the form of this rite carefully as long as the Prophet led the prayer, while they followed him step by step. Because of this they fell into disagreement after the death of the Prophet as to the number of takbir (to say Allahu Akbar) repeated in the salat al-:mayyit. At-Tahawi reported from Isma'il saying

When the Prophet of Allah died, the people differed as to how many takbirs should be' said over the bier. One man would say, 'Iheard the Prophet of Allah say Allahu Akbar seven times.,,While another said, "I heard the Prophet of Allah say Allahu Akbar five times" and a third would say, "I heard the Prophet of Allah say Allahu Akbar four times." So they differed openly until the death of Abu Bakr and when Umar became khalifah and perceived their disagreement he became grieved and sent for one of the sahaba of the Prophet of Allah, and said, "You are the sahaba of the Prophet of Allah! When you differ before the people they shall differ after you, and when you agree upon a matter the people shall agree upon it. So consider what you shall agree upon." And it was as if he had (awakened them. So they replied, "It shall be as you wish, ۰ Leader of the Faithful.' (۱۴

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Thus we can see that the sahaba depended on the Prophet during his lifetime and did not feel that it was immediately necessary to study the rules and concepts closely as long as .they were under his protection

You may think that the picture which has been painted of the sahaba and of the points which illustrate their inability to rule contradict our belief that the prophetical program of instruction achieved a high level of success and produced an awesome and religious generation. In reply to this we must point out that in studying the actual nature of the medial generation who were the Prophet's contemporaries we have not mentioned anything which would clash violently with the positive appraisal of the prophetical instructions which he applied during his noble life. Because, while we believe that the prophetical instructions were a unique and divine example and an outstanding religious revelation in the history of prophetical acts, we have found that the belief in this and the attainment of a fair appraisal of the outcome of these instructions does not depend upon the observation of results without reference to the circumstances which surrounded these instructions, nor upon observations of quantity separated from those of quality. In .order to clarify this we shall cite the following example

We shall assume that there is a teacher who is teaching a number of students the English language and literature, and that we want to assess his teaching potential. It is not sufficient simply to scrutinize the students' standard of cultural knowledge or their familiarity with the English language and its literature.We must also take into consideration the time for which the teacher has been teaching these students, their previous experience, their proximity to or distance from the atmosphere of the English language and literature, the size of the difficulties and exceptional problems which confront the teaching process and hinder its natural course, the targets which the teacher aspired to when teaching the literature of this language to hisstudents, and the .final outcome of the teaching process when compared to many other types of instruction

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And when assessing the prophetical instructions we must take into consideration the :following points

The short length of time in which the Prophet was actually carrying out this plan of (۱) instruction, which did not exceed two decades, as far as his earliest sahaba, who accompanied him at the beginning of his mission were concerned, and did not exceed a single decade for the vast majority of the Ansar, or three orfour years for the large number of converts to Islam from the time of the Truce of al-Hudaybiyya until the .Conquest of Makkah

The previous intellectual spiritual, religious and behavioral environment in which (۲) these people lived before the Prophet started his mission, and the empty simplicity and aimlessness which confronted them in various spheres of their lives. I do not think it necessary to illustrate this point further because it is self-evident. Islam was not a superficial, reformatory process in society, but was rather a radical and revolutionary process aimed at the building of a new society, which implied a totalconceptual change in attitudes between the previous and new environment, to which the Prophet directed all .his efforts

The events and political and military confrontations which be devilled that era on (۳) various different fronts and made the relationship between the Prophet and his sahaba distinct from that of a person like Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) and his disciples, for this relationship was not one of a teacher or instructor who could devote his time totally to his students, but was in fact that of a Prophet who was an instructor while also the military .leader and head of State

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The social and religious conflict which arose from close contact with the Ahl al-Kitab (۴) (the People of the Book), and withvarious different religious cultures, for this contact and the opposition raised by those who opposed the new faith and wereeducated according to older religious culture proved a source of unrest and continual provocation. Indeed every one of us knowsthat this resulted in the Jewish intellectual trend which was infiltrated accidentally or purposely into the sphere of speculation,and a close scrutiny of Al- Qur'an al-Karim is enough to illustrate the extent of the danger posed by the counter revolution and the extensive involvement of revelation in observing it and disputing its .concepts

The fact that the target which the Great Teacher was trying to attain generally was, (۵) at this stage, the creation of a sound,popular framework which would make it possible for the leadership of the new message to interact with the Ummah andbe closely involved in its experiences, both during and after the lifetime of the Prophet. But the target was not, at this stage,the elevation of the Ummah to the level of leadership itself, as this required complete understanding of Islam, comprehensive knowledge of its rules and total awareness of its concepts. The limitation of his target at this stage to the level which we have mentioned was logical, because the nature of the process of change dictated it. For it would have been illogical to conceive this target other than within the bounds of possibility or within the limitations which we have mentioned, considering the circumstances faced by Islam at this time, and the ideological,spiritual, intellectual and social differences between the new religion and the prevalent corrupt reality of the era, which would have made it impossible for the people to raise themselves to the leadership of this religion after only one or two decades.This point shall be examined further in the next paragraph, in which we shall give proofs of the continued responsibility involved as regards the new revolutionary experiment, which was illustrated in the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt, so that the khilafah of Imam Ali was actually dictated by the logical process of .change throughout the history of Islam

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The fact that a great many of the Ummah which was left by the Prophet were(۶) Muslimat al-Fath, that is Muslims who converted to Islam after the Conquest of Makkah and after the new religion had become the most powerful political and military force in the Arabian Peninsula. Naturally, the Prophet was only destined to limited contact with them in the short time left to him after the Conquest, and most of this contact was in his capacity as ruler. Because of the stage through which the Islamic State was passing the concept of Mu'allifa Qulubuhum appeared, and in order to win over the hearts of people they were given the right to receive zakat and other measures. Clearly this section of the Ummah was not separated from the other, but was an integral part thereof, influencing .and being influenced at the same time

Thus, in the study of these six points, we have discovered that the prophetical instructions were actually extremely successful and brought about a singular transformation within the society,while also producing a virtuous generation who were capable of realizing the Prophet's aim as regards the creation of a sound,popular foundation who could rally around the guiding leadership of the new experience and support it. Because of this we also find that this generation was capable of performing its role as the sound, popular foundation as long as mature and guiding leadership was present in the person of the Prophet. Had this leadership been allowed to take its divine course, this foundation would have continued to play its correct part, although this does not mean that it was actually ready to assume this leadership itself, or to guide the new experience, because this would have required greater spiritual and believing cohesion with Islam, and a stronger and more extensive identification with its rules and concepts and with the various aspects of its attitudes toward life,while also necessitating a more intense elimination of the ranks of the Ummah which included the munafiqun, the mundisun (infiltrators) and the Mu'allifa Qulubuhum, who were still a numerically and historically important part of this generation,whose negative influences are indicated by the number of verses in Al-Qur'an al-Karim in which especially the munafiqun, their machinations and their position are mentioned. There were, of course, some individuals from this generation whose high religious attainments were formed by this instruction, as their personalities fused in its melting pot, like Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr, Ammar and many .others

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But I would like to point out that the existence of these individuals as part of this large generation does not prove that this generation had, as whole, attained the level at which the control of this momentous experience could be handed over to them, according to the principle of shura. Indeed, even the majority of these individual elites did not possess the religious qualifications which would have made them capable of leading the experience as regards its intellectual and cultural features, inspite of their staunch loyalty and profound devotion, because Islam is not an ideology made by man whose ideas could be defined as a result of practical experience, or whose concepts could be clarified as a result of devoted experimentation. It is rather the message of Allah, whose rules and concepts had been ordained and divinely increased with every piece of legislation necessitated by experience, so the leadership needed to fully comprehend its statutes and details, and study assiduously its rules and concepts, otherwise it would be forced to rely upon previous intellectual ideas and tribal connections, which would lead to a break in the continuity of the experience, especially when we remember that Islam was the last of the religions of the heavens and must continue and surpass all temporal, regional and national laws. It was thus impermissible that the leadership,which would mould the foundations of this eternal religion,should practice a series of mistakes and correct actions, in which the mistakes would be accumulated over a period of time until they formed a fatal flaw which could threaten the Islamic experience with decline and .destruction

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Everything that has gone before proves that the instructions given by the Prophet to the Muhajirun and the Ansar did notreach the level which would have been necessitated by the conscious, intellectual and political preparation required toguide the future path of the da'wah and the process of change which had been instigated by the Prophet. It was, in fact,restricted to that required for a conscious, popular foundation which could rally to the .leadership of the da'wah, both in thepresent and the future

Each assumption which points to the belief that the Prophet intended that the support of the future experience and guardianship of the da'wah immediately after his death should be vested in the Muhajirun and the Ansar implicitly involves an idictment against the greatest and most discerning religious leader in the history of reformatory movements, because there was no cleardistinction between the understanding necessary for the popular foundation of the da'wah and that necessary for the guidance of the da'wah or its .intellectual and political leadership

Point three

The da'wah was, of course, a reformatory process and a framework for a new way of life, charged with the task of building a new community and with uprooting all jahili principles .and all their foundations

The Islamic Ummah did not, as a whole, live in the shadow of this reformatory process for more than a single decade at the most, which is not usually long enough, according to the logic of ideological religions and reformatory beliefs, to raise a generation to the level of awareness and objectivity and freedom from the residue of past ideas, at which they can grasp the ideas of the new da'wah, and be capable of assuming the guardianship of the message, and handling the problems of this da'wah, while also continuing its reformatory process without a leader. In fact the logic of ideological religions makes it inevitable that the Ummah should continue under ideological trusteeship for a longer period of time, in .which it could be raised to the level of guardianship itself

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This is not something which we have simply inferred, as it was also a fact substantiated by the events which took place after the death of the Prophet and became clear after half a century or less in the attempts of the Muhajirun and the Ansar to lead and guard the da'wah. For, after less than a quarter of a century of this 'guardianship,' the khilafah of this generation and the religious experience resulting from its leadership were destroyed under the force of the heavy attacks made upon it by the former enemies of Islam, but this time from within rather than from without the Islamic experience. These enemies were able to infiltrate by degrees the weak points of this experience and take advantage of the inattentive leadership. Then they usurped this leadership insolently and violently and forced the Ummah and its original, pioneering generation to renounce its identity and its leadership, while the leadership itself turned into a line of hereditary kings, infatuated with prestige, who murdered the innocent, squandered wealth, neglected the rules of Islam,caused its laws to ossify, and fraudulently used the resources of the people. Thus the lands conquered by the Muslims became the gardens of Quraysh and the khilafah a .toy of Banu Umayya

So the true facts of the experience after the death of the Prophet and the results of this quarter century support the previous inference, which emphasized the support for guidance, and the intellectual and political leadership of the Muhajirun and Ansar immediately after the death of the Prophet was a premature step which was taken before its natural time. It is, however, illogical that the Prophet should have taken a step .of this kind

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Notes

.Tarikh al-Yaqubi, ۲/۱۲۶-۱۲۷ -۶

.Tabaqat ibn Sa'd, ۳/۲۴۸ -۷

.Tarikh al-Tabari, ۴/۵۲ -۸

.See the texts concerning as-saqifa an-Nahj, ۶/۶-۹ -۹

.Sunan ad-Darimi, ۱/۵۰ -۱۰

.Ibid -۱۱

.Ibid -۱۲

.Surat al-'Abasa, ۲۸-۳۲ -۱۳

'.Umdatul Qari -'۱۴

The Third Path

The third path is the only remaining possibility which is consistent with the nature of the facts and logical in light of the circumstances surrounding the da'wah and the faithful, and the attitude of the Prophet, namely that the Prophet adopted apositive stance towards the future of Islam after his death and at the orders of Allah, May He be Praised and Exalted, chose someone whose deep involvement in the formation of the da'wah made him an obvious nominee, and specifically prepared him religiously and in the art of leadership so that he could exemplify the intellectual authority and political leadership of the experience, and maintain the leadership of the Ummah and its ideological structure after the Prophet's death, with the support of the conscious, popular foundation of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, and strengthen it towards the level at which it could handle the .problems of leadership

This, we find, is the only way in which the Prophet could ensure the future security of the .da'wah and protect the experience from deviation in the course of its development

And thus it was. There are not any signs in the texts which have been transmitted on the

authority of the Prophet to prove that he privately prepared any of the other Muslims religiously, culturally or ideologically so as to qualify them to assume either intellectual or .political authority

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Nor is there any proof there in that he entrusted any of the other Muslims with the future of the da'wah and with the intellectual and political leadership of the Ummah after his death. But these facts only serve to explicate the Prophet's attitude towards the third possiblity facing him, and to prove that the nature of the affair was in fact as we have surmised. The person designated to receive this training in the religion and leadership and chosen as the one to whom the future of the da'wah and its intellectual and political leadership would be surrendered was none other than Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, whose deep involvement in the formation of the da'wah made him an obvious nominee. He was the first Muslim and the first to fight in the path of Islam (mujahid) during its bitter battle against all its enemies, and was deeply involved in the life of the Prophet, and was his foster-son whose eyes opened on the Prophet's lap and who grew up under his protection, and who had more opportunity to collaborate with him and take part in his plans than any other man alive. In fact the evidence from the lives of the Prophet and the Imam which indicate that the Prophet prepared the Imam specially in .religious matters is indeed substantial

For the Prophet chose to explain the concept of da'wah and its truths to him, and gavehim intellectual answers and sought to cultivate the Imam's awareness when he asked numerous questions while also spending long hours with him during both the night and the day, opening his eyes to the concepts of Islam and to the problems to be faced during its progress, and to the management of the task until the last day of his noble life. Al-:Hakim reports in Al-Mustadrak on the authority of Ibn Ishaq

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? "I asked AI-Qasim ibn al-Abbas, "How did Ali become the heir of the Messenger of Allah'

He replied, "Because he was the first among us to embrace Islam and the most faithful in ".'his adherence there to

And in the Hulyat al-A wliya it is reported from Ibn Abbas that he said: 'We used to say .that the Prophet entrusted Ali with ۷۰ pledges which he did not entrust to anyone else

Also An-Nisa'i reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas that Ali used to say: 'I had a' privileged relationship with the Messenger of Allah which was not granted to any other .mortal, as I used to visit the Prophet of Allah every night

If he was praying I would wait until he said the tasbih and then enter, and if he wasn't praying he would permit me and I would enter. 'It is also related from the Imam that he said: 'I had two meetings with the Prophet - the night meeting and the day meeting. 'While An-Nisa'i also relates that the Imam used to say: 'Whenever I asked the Messenger of Allah a question he replied and when I was silent he would speak to me.' AI-Hakim also relates this in AI-Mustadrak and says that it is sound according to the two Shaikhs (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). An-Nisa'i relates from Umm Salama that she used to say: 'By the One by Whom Umm Salama swears, the closest person to the Messenger of Allah at his death was Ali. On the morning that the Messenger of Allah died the Messenger of Allah sent for Ali, and I thought that he had been sent on an errand because the Prophet said, "Has Ali come?" three times. He came before sunrise, and when he came we recognized that the Prophet wished to talk with him. So we left the house (we were at that time with the Messenger of Allah in 'Aisha's house), and as I was the last to leave the .house, I sat just outside the door and was closest to it

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And Ali leant over him and was the last person to converse with him as the Prophet whispered and talked withhim. 'Amir al-Mu'minin (leader of the Faithful) Imam Ali in his famous rigorous speech, in which he described his unique relationship with the Messenger and the Prophet's care regarding his training and education, said: 'You know of my connection with the Messenger of Allah, my close kinship to him and my intimate .position

He put me on his lap when I was a child, hugged me to his breast, embraced me in his bed, so that his body touched mine and so I smelled his scent, and would also chew things .and then give them to me to eat

But he did not find me lying in my speech or pompous in my act. I used to follow him as the small camel follows its mother and every day he showed me part of his moral acts and ordered me to do likewise. Every year he used to take me to Hira and only I could see him, for at that period of time of Islam there was only the Messenger of Allah, Khadijah and myself as the third, as nobody else lived in the house. So I saw the light of revelation and the message and smelled the fragrance of prophecy. 'These testimonies and plenty of other evidence gives us a picture of the training which the Prophet gave to Imam Ali in .order to raise him to the level at which he coud lead the da'wah successfully

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Similarly, there are a great many indications from the lifetime of Imam Ali after the death of the Prophet which reveal the Prophet's private ideological training of Imam Ali and reflect the effects and results of this private instruction. The Imam was the man to whom the ruling leadership resorted for consultation and authority when they wished to solve some difficult problem which they could not solve themselves. But we cannot find a single instance in the history of the Islamic experience during the time of the four khulafah in which the Imam turned to someone else for an opinion as to the way in which a problem should be dealt with according to Islam, whereas there were tens of instances in which the ruling Islamic leadership felt it necessary to consult the Imam, in spite of their .reservations in this matter

If the evidence for the claim that the Prophet prepared the Imam privately to assume the leadership of the da'wah after his death are numerous, those which prove that the Prophet revealed this plan and officially entrusted the intellectual and political leadership of the da'wah to Imam Ali are hardly less numerous; a fact which we can discern from the Hadith al-Dar; Hadith ath-Thaqalayn, Hadith al-Manzila. Hadith aI-Ghadir and from many other prophetical texts. So Shi'ism was established within the Islamic da'wah and was exemplified in the prophetical presentation there of, which was implemented by the Prophet at the orders of Allah so that the future safety of the da'wah could be ensured. This Shi'ism did not appear as a superficial phenomenon in the theatre of events, but was rather a necessary result of the needs and original circumstances of the da'wah, which made itnecessary for Islam to produce Shi'ism. In other words, it was incumbent upon the first leader of the experience to instruct a second leader under whose leadership, and under that of his successors, the experience could continue its revolutionary development, and attain the total success of its radical reformatory aims by eliminating all the remains of the fundamental ideas of jahiliyyah and establishing an Ummah which .had reached the level necessary to handle the tasks and problems faced by the da'wah

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How the Shi'a came into existence

We now know how Shi'ism came into existence, but how did the Shi'a emerge and how did the schism of the Ummah develop from this? This is a question which we shall now .answer

When we follow the first stage of the life of the Muslim Ummah during the lifetime of the Prophet we find that there were two different principal trends accompanying the development of the Ummah and the beginning of the Islamic experience from the earliest years, which co-existed within the embryonic Ummah established by the guiding Prophet. This difference between the two trends led to an ideological schism immediately after the death of the Prophet which divided the Ummah into two sections, one of which was destined to rule and extend its influence so as to include the majority of the Muslims, while the other section was forced further from power and was destined to exist as an opposing minority within the framework of the greater Muslim Ummah. This minority was .in fact the Shi'a

The two principal trends which accompanied the developmentof the Ummah during the lifetime of the Prophet from the beginning were:i) The trend which believed in devotion to Islam and its arbitration, and in total submission to the religious texts in every sphere of life.ii) The trend which believed that belief in Islam did not necessitate devotion except in the special scope of religious observances and metaphysics, and believed in the possibility of ijtihad (independent judgement), and the permissibility of making judgements on this basis with changes and modifications in the religious texts according .to their interests in matters other than the above in the sphere of life

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Although the Sahaba, as the believing and enlightened vanguard of Islam, were the most perfect and most important seeds for its religious development to the extent that there has never in the course of history been an ideological generation more magnificent, purer or nobler than that established by the Prophet, we find that it is necessary to accept the existence of a large trend, from the very lifetime of the Prophet who inclined towards proposing the use of ijtihad and circumstantial considerations in determining their interests, above strict adherence to the religious texts. Similarly, there was another trend which believed in religious arbitration and in submission and devotion there to concerning .all religious texts and all areas of life

One of the factors contributing to the spread of the second trend (al-ijtihad) amongst the Muslim ranks was its coherence withman's natural tendency towards making judgements and according to its interests, as he understands them, rather than according to a decision whose significance he does not understand. This trend was represented by a daring group of important sahaba like, Umar ibn al-Khattab, who disputed with the Messenger and made judgements contradicting the texts in many subjects, believing that they had the right to do so. In thisrespect we can cite Umar's attitude towards the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyyaand his objection there to, his attitude towards the adhan: (call to prayer) and his decision to exclude, 'Hayy 'alakhayr al-'amal,' his attitude towards the Prophet regarding the Mutia'a 'l-Hajj, and other examples of his attitude towards the use .of ijtihad

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Both these trends were reflected in the presence of the Messenger during the last days of his life. In his Sahih, Al-Bukhari quotes on the authority of Ibn Abbas: 'When the Messenger of Allah was about to die there were men gathered in the house, amongst whom was Umar ibn al-Khattab. The Prophet said, "Come I shall give you a document after which none shall go astray." But Umar said, "The Prophet has been overcome by pain and he has already given us the Qur'an, and the Book of Allah is sufficient for us." Where upon the people gathered together in the house disagreed, and one of them argued, saying, "Come near! The Prophet is going to give us a document after which none shall go astray." While another said the same as Umar. And when the nonsensical speech and disagreement became too much for the Prophet he told them, "Depart! "'This incident alone serves to prove the deep-seated attitudes of the two trends, and the extent of the disagreement and struggle between them. In order to illustrate the deep-seated attitudes of the trend who believed in such judgement, we can add an account of the controversy and disagreement between the Sahaba which surrounded the appointment of Usama ibn Zayd over the army, in spite of the fact that there was a clear .prophetical designation to that effect

This controversy continued until the Messenger of Allah, who was ill, came out to the people and spoke to them saying: '۰ people, what is this that I have heard concerning the attitude of some of you to the appointment of Usama? If you oppose the appointment of Usama you should have opposed the appointment of his father before him. I swear by !'Allah that he was worthy of the appointment and that his son is worthy of it after him

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The struggle between these two trends, which was visible duringthe lifetime of the Prophet, was also reflected in the attitude of the Muslims to Imam Ali's designation as leader of the da'wah after the death of the Prophet. Those who represented the devotional trend (AI-Ittijad at-Ta'abbudi) found it necessary to accept this designation without hesitation or modification, whereas the second trend thought that they could reject this designation of the Prophet when their independent judgement led them to one which was more in keeping with their understanding of the circumstances. Thus we can see that the Shi'a appeared immediately after the death of the Prophet and was represented by those Muslims who actually accepted his designation of Imam Ali as the leader,whose leadership had been stipulated by the Prophet which should have been .realized immediately upon the Prophet's death

So the Shi'i trend took form in the first instance because of the prevention of Imam Ali's assumption of the leadership at as-Saqifa and the entrusting of the authority to someone .else

:In Al-ihtijaj At-Tabarsi says, on the authority of Iban ibn Taghlib

I told Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, peace be upon him, "May I be your ransom. Did' any of the Sahaba of the Messenger of Allah deny the appointment of Abu Bakr?" He said, "Yes. Twelve of the Muhajirun denied it: Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn Abi'I-As, Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, AI-Miqdad ibnal-Aswad, Ammar ibn Yasir, and Barida 'l Aslami; as did the following Ansar: Abu 'l-Haytham ibn at-Tayhan, Uthman ibn Hunayf, Khuzayma ibn Thabit ".'Dhu sh 'Shihadatayn, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari

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You may say that if the Shi'i trend represented close adherence to the text while the other trend represented independent judgement this implies that the Shi'a refuted the concept of ijtihad and did not permit themselves to apply it, whereas we know that the Shi'a have always practised the use of ijtihad in matters concerning Islamic law (ash-Shari'ah). The answer to this is that the ijtihad employed by the Shi'a is the derivation of a ruling from the legal texts, which they believe not only to be permissible, but obligatory for a section of the Ummah, not the ijtihad which is to reject the legal texts or to subject the legal text to the personal view of the mujtahid, or to some resultant benefit, for this is .impermissible and the Shi'a trend refutes any such use of ijtihad

When we talk of the development of these two trends from the origins of Islam onwards, one of which followed the texts closely while the other employed ijtihad, we mean by ijtihad the making of judgements in contradiction to the text or the acceptance of such a judgement. The appearance of these two trends would have been natural in the case of any radical and reformatory religion which attempted to change a corrupt reality from its very roots upwards, although the extent of their influence would have differed according to the strength of the residue of previous ideas, the extent of the individual's identification .with the principles of the new religion, and of his devotion there to

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We of course know that the trend which represented the close adherence to the texts identified with Islam and devoted themselves totally to it; and did not reject the use of ijtihad within the framework of the religious texts and in extracting legal rulings from these texts. It is also important that we shouldpoint out that this adherence to the texts does not implyossification and rigidity, which would be incompatible with theproblems imposed by progress and by the many differentmodernizing factors which are part of .man's life

As we understand it, adherence to the text is adherence to Islam and the total acceptance there of, for Islam carries within itself all the flexibility and capacity necessary to adapt to the needs of any particular time and all the elements of modernization and .progress included there in

Thus, adherence to Islam and its texts is also adherence to all these elements, and to their capacity for original creation and modernization.This is a general sketch to explain Shi'ism as a natural phenomenon within the framework of Islam and the appearance of the Shi'a as an answer to this natural phenomenon. Before ending, I would like to mention .a point which I believe to be very important

Some scholars have tried to distinguish between two different aspects of Shi'ism: the first is spiritual Shi'ism and the second is political Shi'ism. Moreover, they believed that spiritual Shi'ism is older than its political counterpart, and that the Imami Imams from the lineage of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, retired from the political scene after the massacre at Karbala, moved their attention to spiritual guidance and ritual acts, and withdrew from .the world

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However, the truth is that Shi'ism has never been solely a purely spiritual trend from its earliest beginnings, and indeed originated at the very heart of Islam as a movement dedicated to assisting Imam Ali to achieve his rightful position as the sole ideological leader of Islam after the death of the Prophet as we previously explained in our examination of the circumstances which led to the birth of Shi'ism. It is not in fact possible, in view of the circumstances which we have examined, to divorce the spiritual side from the social in any representation of Shi'ism, just as it is impossible to divorce one from the other in Islam itself.

Thus Shi'ism can only be divided when it loses its significance as an attempt to safeguard the future of the da'wah after the death of the Prophet, a future which required a combination of both ideological authority and social leadership. There was a great deal of support for Imam Ali among the Muslim ranks who believed that he was the person capable of maintaining the type of leadership initiated by the three khulafah, and it was this which brought him to power after the murder of Uthman. But this mere support is not Shi'ism, neither spiritual nor political, because the Shi'a believe Imam Ali should have ruled instead of these three khulafah, and should have assumed the khilafah immediately after the Prophet. Thus the wide support for Imam Ali amongst the Muslim ranks extended beyond the scope of true Shi'ism, so that the supposed spiritual and political wings of Shi'ism were actually an element within this greater support, and we can hardly claim this case as an example of divided Shi'ism.

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Similarly, the spiritual and ideological support which the Imam enjoyed from some of the important sahaba during the reigns of Abu Bakr and Umar (such as Salman, Abu Dharr, Ammar andothers) does not indicate a spiritual Shi'ism divorced from its political side. On the contrary, it expresses the fact that these Sahaba believed ideologically and politically in the rights of Imam Ali to the leadership of the da'wah after the death of the Prophet and that their ideological belief in his leadership was reflected in their previous spiritual support, while their political belief in his leadership was reflected in their opposition to the khilafah of Abu Bakr and to the trend which turned the authority from the Imam in favour of another.In fact, there was never any such division between spiritual Shi'ism and social Shi'ism, and such an idea only presented itself to the Shi'i believer after he succumbed to the reality of the situation, and after the fire of Shi'ism in its limited meaning as a movement towards truly Islamic leadership within the Ummah and the accomplishment of the radical, reformatory task undertaken by the Great Messenger had been extinguished in his heart, and had turned into a purely religious belief which the individual .bore within his heart, or from which he derived his conduct and aspirations

We now come to the claim that the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt from the progeny of Imam Husayn withdrew from politics and cut themselves off from the world. In fact it is worth noting that Shi'ism, as we understand it, was a means towards the continuation of truly Islamic leadership. Islamic leaderhip, however,simply means the continuation of the type of leadership initiated by the Noble Messenger towards the total establishment of an Ummah on the basis of Islam, and it is thus impossible to imagine a way in which the .Imams could have withdrawn from social affairs without withdrawing also from Shi'ism

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However,the Imams' decision not to take up arms against the contemporary governments helped to spread the belief that they had in fact abdicated their social interest in the leadership. Yet we possess many texts transmitted on the authority of the Imams which show that each Imam was always ready to undertake military action if he was sure that he had the necessary followers and strength to achieve the Islamic aims. If we follow the path of the Shi'i movement we find that the Shi'i leadership, which was represented by the Imams of the Ahlal-Bayt, believed that the achievement of authority was not in itself sufficient for the fulfillment of the Islamic reformatory process, unless this authority was supported by ideological, popular bases which were aware of the aims of this government, strove to guard it and explain its attitudes to the populace, and stood .firm in times of hardship

In the middle of the first century after the death of the Prophet the Shi'i leadership was still continually trying to regain control of the Ummah by means which they believed in, in spite of the distance between them and the government, because they believed that they had strong, popular support from the Muhajirun, Ansar, and Tabi'un: (next generation) who were aware, or semi-aware, of their rights to authority. However, half a century later, after all noticeable signs of this popular support had vanished and new generations had grown up under insidious influences, it became clear that any achievement of this control by the Shi'i movement would not lead to its lofty goal, because the popular support, which would have assisted them and sacrificed themselves for them because of .their awareness of their rights to power, no longer existed

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In view of this there were only two possible courses of action: firstly, an attempt to reestablish these conscious popular bases, which could prepare the ground for the eventual achievement of power; and secondly, to shake the consciousness of the Muslim Ummah, so as to maintain the life and vigour of the Islamic consciousness and the Ummah, and protect the Ummah against the total abdication of its identity and nobility to deviant rulers.The first course of action was actually adopted by the Imams themselves, while the second was adopted by the 'Ali revolutionaries who tried to protect the .conscience and free will of the Muslim Ummah by their courageous self-sacrifice

Those of the revolutionaries who were sincere enjoyed the support of the Imams. Imam Ali ibn Musa ar-Ridha, peace be upon him, told Al-Ma'mun, when he discussed the martyred Zayd ibn Ali: 'He was one of the scholars (ulama) of the Ahl al-Bayt who became angry on Allah's behalf and fought His enemies until he was killed fighting in His path. My father, Musa ibn Ja'far,peace be upon him, told me that he used to hear his father,Ja'far, say, "May Allah have mercy on my Uncle Zayd, who encouraged the people to support the most suitable leader from the Al-Muhammad. For had he been victorious, he would have fulfilled his promise to Allah, because he used to say, 'I am calling you to support the most '."'suitable leader from the family of Muhammad

Thus the fact that the Imams abandoned the idea of direct military action against deviant rulers does not mean that they set aside the political aspect of their leadership and turned all their attention to prayers only. On the contrary, it demonstrates how their different forms of political policy were shaped by contemporary circumstances and by their profound awareness of the exact nature of their radical policy and of the best .means to its fulfillment. And Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds

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Chapter ۲

About the Author

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WiIaya of Imam Ali and its Theological-Juridical Implications for the Islamic Political Thought

This paper examines the Qur'anic origins of the concept of wilaya in light of its connection with the historical wilaya of Imam Ali. Various explanations of the concept in the Qur'anic exegesis, written by different schools of thought in Islam, have been studied to investigate the theological importance of wilaya to the fundamental doctrine of the leadership (imama) in Islam. The close relationship between the doctrines of divine justice (al-'Adl) and the necessity of the divinely-appointed imam in the Shi'i school of thought underscore the pivotal status of the acceptance of the wilaya of Imam Ali as imperative to the faith of believers. At the same time, recognition of this wilaya of Imam Ali is regarded as a precondition to the establishment of the ideal public order based on the divine scale of justice. Consequently, no ideal public order is conceivable in Islam without the imama being invested in the person in whom this wilaya is validated through a divine designation. This theological relationship between the imama and wilaya through divine designation made it juridically problematic for anyone other than the divinely appointed Imam to assume the absolute wilaya in the Muslim Ummah. This problem of assuming the wilaya byother than the Imam himself was duly treated in the Shi'i jurisprudence, which carefully defined the limits of juridical wilaya in relation to the theological wilaya of the Imam. The paper, thus, demonstrates the significance of the wilaya of Imam Ali in the Qur'anic context of establishing the public order and the necessity of accepting the interdependency between imama and waliya in Islamic .leadership while differentiating between theological and juridical forms of wilaya

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Introduction

When he (the Prophet) had completed its (Hajj) ceremonies, he left for Medina' accompanied by the multitudes previously mentioned. He arrived at the pool of Khum (Ghadir Khum) in al-Juhfa, where the roads of the people of Medina, the people of Egypt and the people of Iraq cross. That was on Thursday, Dhil-Hijjah ۱۸ [when] Jibreel (Gabriel), the faithful, brought down Allah's revelation saying: "۰ Messenger! Deliver that which has been sent down to thee from thy Lord" (۵:۶۷). And he commanded him to point out Ali to the people and proclaim to them the revelation concerning him about the wilaya and the obligation of obedience upon everyone. Those of the people who were in front were near al-Juhfa. The Prophet of Allah commanded that those who advanced should be halted at that place. He forbade them to sit down under five gum acacia trees (sumurat) which were close to each other. When the summons to prayer was given for the noon prayers, he went towards them (the trees) and prayed at the head of the people under them... When he had completed his prayers, he stood delivering a speech in the middle of :the people, on the saddles of the camels. He made them all hear, raising his voice, saying

people, the Kind, the Knower, informed me that a Prophet has not lived but half the ۰"... age of his predecessor and that I am about to be recalled and I responded. I am to be interrogated and you are to be interrogated. What will you say?" The people said, "We bear witness that you have proclaimed the message and that you have given the advice and that you have made the endeavour, may Allah reward you!" He said, "Would you not bear witness that there Is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger; that His Garden is true; that His Fire is true; that death is true; that the hour comes of which there is no doubt; and that Allah will resurrect those in the graves?" They said, "Yes. We hear witness to that." Then he said, "۰ Allah, bear witness [to that]," [and he continued], "۰ people! Do you hear?" They said, "Yes." He said, "I am preceding you to the Pond (al-Hawd) and you will rejoin me at the Pond... See to it how you will look after the Two Treasures (ath-Thaqalayn) after me." A caller called out, "What are the Two Treasures, ۰ Messenger of Allah?" He said, "The Bigger Treasure (ath-Thaqlu'l-Akbar) is the Book of Allah, one end of it is in the Hand of Allah and one end is in your hands. If you adhere to it you will not go astray. The Smaller Treasure (ath-Thaqlu'l -Asghar) is my Family ('Itrati). The Kind, the Knower, informed me that they will not separate until they rejoin me at the Pond. I wished that from Allah for them. Do not precede them so that you

may not perish. Do not fail to reach them so that you may not succumb." Then he held the hand of Ali and raised it until the white of the armpit could be seen and all the people recognized him. He said, "O people, who is more worthy ('awla) [in the eyes of] the believers than their own selves?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "Allah is my Master and I am the master of the believers and I am worthier in their eyes than their own selves. Whoever has me for his master has Ali for his master." He said it thrice, and according to Ahmad, the imam of the Hanbalis, four times."(1)

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The above proclamation at Ghadir Khum regarding the wilaya of Imam Ali occurred in the last year of the Prophet's life (۱۰ AH/۶۳۲ AD). Fourteen centuries have passed since then, and looking at the number of books and studies written on the subject of wilaya, both by the proponents as well as opponents, the proclamation at Ghadir Khum proved to be one of the most pivotal events for the determination of the direction of the political-religious history of Islam. Questions about the historicity of that event, whether raised by the Sunni scholars or by their western counterparts, who, more than often, followed the Sunni sources in their conclusions about the early history of Islam, have overlooked the political-religious implications of Ghadir Khum on the subsequent conceptualization of Islamic leadership (imama) among Muslims in general. The event at al-Juhfa, moreover, unfolded the Qur'anic presupposition in the matter of the direction that human society must follow in order to attain the final goal for which it has been created. On studying the Qur'an in its entirety the following general view emerges about human society which .directly affects the question of leadership (imama) of that society

To begin with, the Qur'an states more than once that Islam is not a new religion but the culmination of Allah's spiritual and temporal commands made known throughout human history through the mediatorship of divinely appointed prophets like Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), and the other prophets, the last in that line being Muhammad, peace be upon him. Thus, the prophet is the bearer of divine revelation that puts forth the divine commands for the guidance of humanity. This guidance lays the foundation of human social organization by providing a set of laws and rules by which the believers manage their affairs and through which their public order is governed or should govern itself. Accordingly, the divine guidance forms the basis for relations between man and Allah, on the one hand, and, between all people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, as well as between man and all aspects of the creation, on the other. Furthermore, the divine guidance also contains rational principles which should help human intellect to infer detailed rules to organize the Muslim society and proffer the means to resolve conflicts between individuals and between individuals and the public order which has taken upon .itself to implement the essential elements of the divine directives

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It is relevant to point out that unlike any other legal-political-social system, Islamic revelation clearly points toward an integrated concept of life based on the intricate relationship between this world and the hereafter. It regulates the conduct of the public order and of the individual in all aspects of human concern, linking the mundane and transcendental concerns in an inseparable whole. In this linkage, the will of Allah is decisive in guiding the inter-relationship of humans, and of man and his Creator. (۲)

The Qur'an regards the knowledge of the All-Knowing and All-Powerful Creator a prior through the precise creation of the innate disposition (fitra) in humanity, which, if it heeds to the call of the divine guidance, would attain 'prosperity' (al-falah).

These preliminary considerations about the Qur'anic view of divine guidance explain the inter-relationship of the Islamic norms provided in the Shari'ah, that divine scale of justice and equity, and the leader (imam) who exercises the divinely invested authority in him to lead the Muslim community to the prescribed goal of creating an ethical order on earth. The Shari'ah norms and the divinely appointed leadership fulfill humanity's need for the authoritative guidance based upon spiritual values giving man the existential meaning of his position in the universal context of Islamic revelation. The interdependency between the divine norms and the divinely appointed authority to attain the Qur'anic prosperity rejects the notion of separation between temporal and spiritual spheres of human activity. Moreover, the connection between divine guidance and the creation of the Islamic world order, as a consequence, marked the inevitable interdependency between the religious and the political in Islam.

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The entire question of wilaya and its ramifications for the qualified leadership (imama) to further the divine plan and to enable Allah's religion to succeed must be seen from the perspective of the Islamic promise of the creation of an ethically just order on earth. More importantly, the belief in the wilaya of Imam Ali gave rise to the group of dedicated individuals among the associates of the Prophet who formed the nucleus of the early Shi'a. These early followers of Imam Ali represented the growth of discontent among the Muslims who refused to acknowledge and regard as legitimate the rule of those whom they considered usurpers of a position of leadership that rightfully belonged to Ali ibn Abi Talib and his descendants. The period also caused the predicament of the Muslim community precipitated by the Muslim political power under the khilafah which led to revolutions and rebellions as well as to discussions and deliberations. This is depicted in the early Islamic fiqh (theology cum jurisprudence) (۳) literature that emerged toward the end of the second/eighth century. Early fiqh wove together the various threads of Islamic legal practice with the doctrinal underpinnings of early Muslim groupings. Consequently, the juridical opinions in the early fiqh works were formulated by taking into consideration whether certain legal or political injunctions affected the legitimacy of one or the other leader among the associates of the Prophet favored by each faction. In other words, the legitimacy of a leader allowed him to be used as a valid legal-religious precedent required to establish the authoritativeness of Islamic practices. Thus, even when a particular ruling went against explicitly textual evidence provided by the Qur'an, the overriding consideration for the early Muslim scholars was the preservation and legitimation of the authority in power, a consideration that came to be justified under the .(rubric of aI-masalih aI-'amma (the general welfare of the Muslim community

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The most important issue throughout Shi'i history has been access to the right guidance as an important consequence of the acknowledgement of the wilaya of Imam Ali. For the Shi'as, the right guidance had continuously been available to the Ummah even though the Imams, except for the short period of Imams Ali and Hasan's khilafah, were not invested with political authority and were living under the political power exercised by the de facto governments. The possession of the wilaya (not- withstanding the Imam's lack of political power, he still had the right to demand obedience from his followers) was clearly seen in the Imam's ability to provide religious leadership by interpreting divine revelation authoritatively. What was decided by him through interpretation and elaboration was .binding on the believers

The interpretation of the divine revelation by the Imam, only because of his position as the wali of Allah, was regarded as the right guidance needed by the people at all times. It was, moreover, the divine guidance that theologically justified the superstructures erected on the two doctrines of Imami Shi'ism: the justice of Allah and the designation of the Imam, free from error and sinful deviations, in order to make Allah's will known to humanity. The belief in divine justice demanded that Allah do what was best for humanity; and the belief in divine truthfulness generated the confidence that Allah's promise would be fulfilled. The proof that Allah was doing what had been promised was provided by the divinely created institutions of the prophethood (nubuwwa) and the imamate (through the wilaya) to guide humanity toward the creation of an ideal public order. In response to the dilemma created by the end of the manifest leadership of the Imams through the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, and the continued need of the community to their guidance, the Shi'i leaders expounded the theological and legal content of the Islamic revelation through meticulous study of the Qur'an and elaborated upon the teachings of the Imams, in which a prominent place was given to the faculty of .(reasoning (aI-'Aql

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The importance of reason in the exposition of the fundamental tenets of Islam was in accord with the Imami Shi'i rational theology, in which reason was prior to both sources of revelation, the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This does not mean that the revelation was not regarded as all-comprehensive. However, it was reason that acknowledged the comprehensiveness of the revelation by engaging in its interpretation and discovering all the principles that the believers needed to know. In addition, there was recognition of a fundamental need of interpretation of the revelation by reason, all the more so when the authority invested with divine knowledge was in occultation. At any rate, the decisive responsibility to guide the community by interpreting revelation rationally needed authorization from a divine source, a sort of designation to assume the wilaya similar to that which was initiated at Ohadir Khum that could guarantee to Muslims the availability .of right guidance based on Islamic revelation

Ostensibly, only such an authorized person could assume the authority that accrued to the Imam as the rightful successor to the Prophet. Moreover, only the investiture of the wilaya (which reserved the right to demand obedience, depending on legal-rational circumstances) and the assuming of political power (qudra or saltana), which could exact or enforce obedience) could establish the rule of justice and equity on earth, as promised .by the Islamic revelation

In light of the above, the central position of the event at Ghadir Khum for Islam becomes evident. The proclamation by the Prophet on that occasion gave rise to the tension between the ideal leadership promoted through the wilaya of Ali ibn Abi Talib and the real one precipitated by human forces to suppress the purposes of Allah on earth. The acknowledgement of the validity of the declaration about the wilaya at Ghadir Khum, in some sense, became the yardstick for measuring the true faith in the divine promise for humanity. Consequently, the entire theological question of qualified leadership to further the divine plan and to enable Allah's religion to succeed must be seen from the perspective of the Islamic promise of the creation of an ethically just order on earth by the rightful possessor of the wilaya. The relationship of the leadership (imama) and the possession of the wilaya make it impossible to conceive an ideal public order in Islam without this leadership being invested in the person in whom the wilaya functions as a .divine designation

It was for this reason that in Imami Shi'ism the concept of wilaya assumed a pivotal status as a precondition to the establishment of the ideal public order based on the divine scale of justice. However, it was important for the Imami theologians to secure the Qur'anic origins of the doctrine of wilaya and connect it with the notion of human obligation, the fulfillment of which was regarded as necessary to attain prosperity in this and the next world. At this point, let us turn our attention to the tradition that was to .become the cornerstone of the Imami theory of political authority

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Abd al-Husayn Ahmad al-Amini al-Najafi, Al-Ghadir fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunna wa al- (۱) .Adab, vol ۱, Beirut, ۱۹۶۷, P ۹-۱۱, and all the Sunni and Shi'i sources cited therein

This is the meaning of the word the Qur'an applies so often to indicate the divine (۲) purpose in endowing humanity with guidance, namely, al-falah. Usually translated as 'prosperity,' falah signifies the good of both this and the next world for those who have .responded to the divine guidance

fiqh in its early usage was not limited to legal jurisprudence. It dealt with doctrinal and (۳) credal matters connected with basic Islamic beliefs, including the subject of Muslim authority after the Prophet's death. This early trend in fiqh writing continued much later as is evidenced in many works of fiqh that were written in the sixth/twelfth-thirteenth century which began with a prologue on the main tenets of Islam. See article, Fiqh in Encyclopaedia of Islam, ۲nd edition; also Introduction to my work: The Just Ruler in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence, New York: .Oxford University Press, ۱۹۸۸

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Wilaya as the Moral Vision of Islamic Revelation

The cornerstone of the Imami theory of political authority is the existence of an Imam from among the progeny of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, clearly designated by the latter to assume the leadership of the Muslim Ummah. Acknowledgement of the authority of the Imam falls within the category of the religious obligations (al-Takalif al-Shar'iyya) imposed on the adherents of the Imam. In Imami Shi'ism, the government belonged to the Imam alone, for he was equally entitled to political leadership and religious authority. However, even though the Imam was entitled to both the political and religious leadership, his imama was not contingent upon his being invested as the ruler of the Ummah. The religious leadership empowered the Imam to interpret Islamic revelation and elaborate on it without committing an error. In this respect, the Imam was like the Prophet, who was endowed with special knowledge and had inherited the knowledge of divine revelation through his designation in the wilaya. The Imam is, thus, the link with the way of guidance, and without acknowledging his wilaya no person seeking guidance can attain it. This wilaya (the spiritual authority with the right to demand obedience), according to the Imami teaching, was not contingent upon the Imam's being invested as the ruling authority (sultan, who could and did exact or enforce obedience) of the community. As such, the spiritual authority resided in Imam Ali from the day the Prophet died, for he became the wali aI-'amr (the executor of the Prophet's spiritual function) through the Prophet's designation on the occasion of Ghadir Khum. This leadership would continue to be available in the line of the Imams, explicitly designated by the preceding Imams. It was in this latter sense that the imama of the Ummah came to be conceptualized. Therefore, religiously spealling, to ignore the wilaya and disobey these Imams was tantamount to disbelief in Allah's promise that He would provide the .necessary guidance to lead humanity toward the creation of an ideal world order

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This confidence in the proclamation of Ghadir Khum regarding the future leadership was directly responsible for generating a threefold religious experience of the Shi'i community which became the decisive sources of the subsequent Imami political attitude. These were martyrdom (shahada), occultation (ghayba) and precautionary dissimulation (taqiyya). What made the Shi'as responsive to their religious leaders has in large measure to do with this threefold religious experience which conditions their political attitudes and inspires their willingness to strive to preserve their religious identity in the context of the .larger Muslim community

Martyrdom (shahada) has been sustained as a religious ordeal in Shi'i political history by the conviction that Allah is just and commands human society to pursue justice in accord with the guidance provided by divine revelation to the Prophet. The divinely inspired guidance also requires obedience to the Prophet in his capacity as the head of the Islamic polity which would exist for the implementation of justice. The Imam, who is regarded as the rightful successor of the Prophet, must also be upheld as the true leader of the community to whom obedience is due in his capacity as the wali aI-'amr of the Muslim Ummah. When the Shi'i Imam, following the death of the Prophet, was denied his right to assume the temporal authority invested in him by divine designation, as the Shi'as believe, direct political action was regarded as justified to establish the rule of justice-- to replace a usurpatory rule by a just and legitimate one. The ensuing struggle to install a legitimate political authority resulted in the murder of several Shi'i leaders. In light of the above conviction, these violent deaths were regarded as martyrdom suffered in order to .defeat the forces of oppression and falsehood

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The most powerful symbol of this religious experience has without question been the Third Imam of the Shi'as, Husayn ibn Ali (d ۶۱ AH/۶۸۰ AD), the grandson of the Prophet, whose martyrdom is annually commemorated with solemnity through- out the Shi'i world. The importance attached to the commemor- ation of Imam Husayn's martyrdom has provided the shi'i community with a religious paradigm that is traced with remarkable enthusiasm by the community. The commemoration went beyond its basic purpose of recounting the tragedy that befell the family of the Prophet. It provided a platform that was used to communicate the Shi'i teachings to the populace which had little or no academic preparation to utilize written sources on the subject. Indeed, these important .gatherings have served as the principal platform of communication with the Shi'i public

Recognizing the low level of religious education among the lay believers, the Shi'i leaders used the commemorative gatherings as a forum by which to awaken their followers to the injustices of the socio-political realities of their times. With the increase of religious awareness among the Shi'as came the demand for some detailed information on topics that were touched upon in these commemorative gatherings. Subsequently, the mourning gatherings were utilized to disseminate religious knowledge which, among other things, included information on both quietist and activist postures of the Shi'i ideology, depending upon the socio-political climate at the time. The religious experience of martyrdom in Shi'ism thus became a formidable channel for mobilizing the Shi'i .populace

The second religious experience, namely, occultation (the absence of the Twelfth Imam from the temporal sphere), signified the postponement of the establishment of a just Islamic order, pending the return of the last Imam. Religiously speaking, the doctrine of occultation connoted some sort of divine intervention in saving the life of the Imam, the only awaited Just Ruler, by moving him from the realm of the visible to invisible existence, and conveyed the idea that the situation was beyond the control of those who proposed to overthrow tyrannical rulers in order to establish the Islamic rule of justice. Furthermore, the occultation of the last Imam and his eventual return as the Mahdi of the Muslim Ummah at a favourable time helped the Shi'as to persevere under difficult circumstances. This hope in the future necessarily implied postponement of the establishment of the thoroughly just Islamic order pending the reappearance of the last .Imam, who alone could be invested with the wilaya - the Muslim political authority

Consequently, religious experience derived as a result of belief in the occultation has, on the one hand, raised questions about creating a thoroughly Islamic public order during the absence of the Twelfth Imam; and on the other, it demanded that the entire Shi'i community provide means for its religious, social, and political survival pending the final .return of the Imam

The attitude of tenacity in this religious experience is derived from the belief that the establishment of an Islamic order without divine intervention through the return of the infallible Imam is impossible. The theological problem for anyone to assume the authority accruing to the Imam as the rightful successor of the Prophet, in whom the wilaya resembling that of Imam Ali is invested, is in its implications for the universalistic authority .of the Imam whose political authority cannot be delegated to any Shi'a however qualified

On the other hand, the attitude of responsibility of the community in this religious experience is derived from a rational interpretation of the Qur'anic obligation imposed collectively on the community to undertake the duty of supervising its own affairs under the religious and moral injunction of 'enjoining the good and forbidding the evil,' even when the Imam is absent. By this interpretation, some religious leaders delegated the Imam's wilaya, political as well as juridical, to a qualified member of the Shi'i community, who, in his capacity as the trustee responsible for directing the community, would be .'willing to shoulder the obligation of 'enjoining the good and forbidding the evil

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The third religious experience stemming from the practice of shielding the true intent of the faithful in the community from unbelievers and outsiders through precautionary dissimulation (taqiyya) determined the political direction of all the Imams and their followers. The Imams encouraged taqiyya and even declared it to be a duty incumbent upon their followers, so as to avoid pressing for the establishment of the ideal rule and overthrow of the wrongful authority of the de facto governments. In a sense, taqiyya signified the will of the Shi'i community to continue to strive for the realization of the ideal Islamic polity, if not by launching the revolution contingent upon the appearance of the Twelfth Imam and his consolidation as the leader of the community, then at least by preparing the way for such a revolution in the future. In the meantime, the Shi'as had to avoid expressing their true opinions publicly about the short-comings evident in the various de facto Muslim governments, regardless whether Shi'i or Sunni, in such a way as to cause disunity and enmity. Consequently, the practice of taqiyya was determined by the conditions of the Shi'as as a minority group living under adverse settings; here again, the religious leadership determined the appropriate time for the community to abandon .quietist passivity and engage in activism

These three religious experiences of the Shi'as during the first three centuries of Islamic history shaped the political outlook of the Imami scholars whenever they were faced with a new political situation. Rulings on such a situation could be traced back to precedents set by the Imams. But the question of the legitimacy of a political rule established by a professing Imami Shi'a during the absence of the political discretion of the actual wali al-'amr, the Twelfth Imam, was an issue that had no precedent set during the lifetime of the Imams. Imami jurists could not give a legal opinion based on a precedent set by the theory of Imamate of the infallible Imams. As a result, they had to guide the community by issuing a legal opinion based on their extrapolation in the terms of the documentation provided by the communications transmitted on the authority of the Imams regarding the .nature of Imami political authority during the occultation

The main concern of the Imami scholars was to provide the Shi'i community with practical guidance relevant to their survival under de facto political authorities. None of the classical theological texts on the fundamental principles (usul al-din) of the Imami school deal with the possibility, not even as a fail accompli of temporal Imami authority invested with the wilaya of the Imam during the occultation. Such a discussion would necessarily have involved tampering with the terms of the doctrine of the imama, which was absolutely ruled out because of the absence of any directly designated deputy of the Twelfth Imam. The 'special deputyship,' during the short occultation (٨٧٣-٩۴l A.D.), was seen as the ongoing guidance available to the community through the Imam's explicit deputization. With the occurrence of the complete occultation (from ٩۴١ AD), the ongoing .guidance through deputization of a specific person was terminated

However, the question of the leadership of the Shi'as in the absence of the Imam was a crucial one. A sense of urgency is reflected in the Imami jurisprudence whenever the question of exercising the Imam's authority without a specifically designated deputy comes up in the treatment of religious obligations requiring the presence of either the Imam or his appointed deputy for that purpose. It was under these circumstances that the Imami jurists had to deal with the issue of the 'general' deputyship of the Imam, which was vested in them as the custodians of Imami teachings. Nevertheless, the Imami jurists who addressed the question of the deputyship of the 'general' deputy of the Twelfth Imam were very conscious of the theoretical position of the Imam as the .absolute wielder of the wilaya

The Trust (al-Amana) in the Qur'an and the wilaya

The Trust (al-Amana) in the Qur'an and the wilaya

Wilaya in the Qur'an is intrinsically related to the moral vision of Islamic revelation. Wilaya in this regard is the faculty of the legal and moral authority, which enables a person in whom this authority is invested to exact obedience to fulfill this moral vision. Accordingly, the concept of wilaya is directly connected with the fundamental question of saltana -- exercise of that legal and moral authority by demanding obedience. Islamic revelation regards the creation of an ethical order as an inevitable projection of personal response to the moral challenge of accepting Islam. Personal devotion to Allah implies the responsibility of furthering the realization of a just society, embodying all the .manifestations of religious faith in the material as well as spiritual life of humankind

This responsibility of striving for one's own welfare and that of the society in which one lives derives from the fact that, according to the Qur'an, humankind has boldly assumed 'the trust' that Allah had offered 'unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo! he has proved a .(tyrant and a fool' (۳۳:۷۲

Shaykh Tusi in his Al-Masa'l al-Ha'iriyat (۴) explains amana as taklif (religious-moral obligation imposed by Allah on humanity) and cites the Shi'i opinion as the one in which amana is equated with wilaya. However, he argues that such an equation of amana with wilaya is unnecessary, because the general sense derived from Iaklif also includes acknowledgement of the person in whom wilaya is invested. In his Qur'anic exegesis, Shaykh Tusi explains amana as the contract (aI-'aqd) that humankind must fulfill because (it has been entrusted to humankind by Allah. (۵

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He cites several early authorities to show the complication in interpreting the amana verse which has theological implications in the realm of human volition and responsibility (as the recipient of this 'trust.' (۶

However, as Tusi explains it is in the early traditions dealing with the wilaya that the .amana verse has been interpreted as pointing to the wilaya of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib

Allama Tabataba'i's detailed exegesis on this verse should be regarded as the recapitulation of all these early materials, including those written by the Sunni scholars, and his interpretation is derived in light of the early traditions regarding the wilaya. According to him, the 'trust' is al-wilayat al-ilahiyya, meaning the divine sovereignty which (Allah offered to all creatures. (۷

Only human beings, having assumed the trust, have the potential to attain perfection and perfect their environment. The crux of the problem in the exegesis of the verse is that if man was the only creature of Allah who accepted the 'trust,' why should he be described as a 'tyrant' and fool'? At this point, Allama Tabataba'i's interpretation draws upon the main tenets of Imami theology, which regard the 'trust' in the sense of wilaya as a special favour to humanity entailing enormous responsibility to stand by the obligation of guarding it. Accordingly, only human beings are not afraid to bear the burden of this trust, and to accept the consequences of being a 'tyrant' and 'ignorant,' because they only can acquire the opposite attributes - namely, those of being 'just' ('adil) and 'knowledgeable' ('alim). In fact, both 'tyranny' and 'ignorance' are the primary counterpoise of human responsibility in accepting al-wilaya al-ilahiyya, especially as it concerns Allah's providential purpose in allowing imperfect humanity to accept this responsibility. The acceptance of this wilaya, furthermore, makes human beings acquire both the responsibility for their actions as well as superiority over all other creatures in the world. It is al-wilayat al-ilahiyya that enables them to put society into order in accordance with .their unique comprehension of religion

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However, the wilaya is given to humankind with a clear warning that it will have to rise above 'tyranny' and 'ignorance' by heeding the call of divine guidance. Human beings, according to the Qur'an, have been endowed with the cognition needed to further their comprehension of the purpose for which they are created, and violition to realize it by using their knowledge. It is through divine guidance that human beings are expected to develop the ability to judge their actions and choose what will lead them to prosperity. But this is not an easy task. It involves spiritual and moral development, something that is most challenging in the face of basic human weaknesses indicated by the Qur'an in the :following passage

Surely man was created fretful, When evil visits him, impatient, When good visits him,' .(grudging' (۷۰: ۱۹-۲O

This weakness reveals a basic tension that must be resolved if human beings are to attain the purpose for which they are created. It is at this point that divine guidance is sent through the prophets and revealed messages to provide either the sources and principles or basic norms of social organization under which a divinely sanctioned public order is to be established. The Prophet thus becomes a representative of the divine authority on earth and exercises that authority in conformity with the divine plan for human conduct. ((۸

In this Qur'anic context of the divine guidance for humanity the Prophet's role should be understood as the head of a State and the founder of a religious order. The sense in which the Qur'an speaks about the wilaya of the Prophet is necessarily in conformity with the Qur'anic view of divine guidance governing the whole of human life, not just a limited segment of it. As a consequence, the wilaya of the Prophet meant not merely that the Muslim Ummah be organized in the context of religious devotion to Allah as explained by the Prophet, but also that it acknowledges his political leadership as well. Thus, the wilaya of the Prophet establishes an authoritative precedent regarding the relationship between .religion and political leadership in Islam

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It is on the basis of this concept of wilaya in the Qur'an that one can say that in Islam religious and political authority are one and the same. This wilaya is concerned with the whole life of the Muslim Ummah, with the result that it never relinquished its belief in the identity of religion and government as it saw them in the founder of Islam. The Prophet's emergence, the Muslims believe, had a fundamental purpose behind it: to transform the tribal structure of the Arab society at that time into a Muslim Ummah - a religious-ocial-political community under the divinely planned aI-wilayat aI-ilahiyya.

The social transformation envisioned and initiated by the Prophet was the necessary consequence of this wilaya, which had to be acknowledged by society as a whole, not merely by individuals as a logical outcome of their faith in Allah. Acknowledgement of the wilaya of the Prophet, necessary to live a new life based on divine norms, led to the emphasis on a crucial requirement for the fulfillment of social responsibility of the Muslim Ummah -- namely, that the Ummah always needs to acknowledge a leader, divinely designated, who would exercise wilaya in order to unite its members in their purpose of creating a just social order under the guidance of Islamic revelation. (٩)

Thus, the question of leadership (imama) is of utmost significance in attaining the purpose of Islam, because it is only through divinely guided leadership that the creation of an ideal society could be realized. The need for the divinely guided leadership in the fulfillment of divine planning, under the aegis of al-wilayat aI-ilahiyya, consequently, assumes a central position in the Islamic belief system or worldview, in which the Prophet, as the active representative of the transcendental Allah on earth, is visualized as possessing the divine wilaya. If the ultimate objective of Islam was conceived as the creation of an ideal community living under a fitting moral, legal, and social system of Islam on earth, then such an ideal, as enhanced by the Qur'an and shown by the example of the Prophet himself, was dependent on leadership that could assure its realization.

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This fact was so important that, both during the Prophet's lifetime and immediately following his death in ۶۳۲ AD, the question of Islamic leadership became inextricably interwoven with the purpose of Islamic revelation, namely, the creation of an Islamic order. Islamic revelation unquestionably presumed divine guidance through the divinely appointed mediatorship of the Prophet for the realization of Islamic public order. This mediatorship of the Prophet in human affairs was the logical consequence of the strict monotheistic nature of Islam, which precluded the possibility that Allah assume human form, ruling directly over humanity and governing its affairs. Thus, a ruler to represent Allah on earth and to exercise al-wilaya: al-ilahiyya was deemed necessary in order to .achieve the ultimate goal of Islam

Moreover, in light of the basic human weaknesses indicated in the Qur'an, there had always existed an underlying tension between the purpose of creation and the obstacles to its achievement. This tension was to be resolved, according to the Qur'an, by further acts of divine guidance through the Prophet, who became the 'pattern of moral behaviour (uswo hasana) for human beings, showing them how to reform their character and bring .it into conformity with the divine plan

Studying the Qur'an in its entirety, it becomes evident that the question of divine sovereignty -- aI-wilayat a-ilahiyya -- is the integral element in the creation of an ideal society. It is through such a wilaya that the divinely appointed leader is able to provide a set of religious and moral laws and rules by which believers manage their affairs, and .through which their public order is governed and should govern itself

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In the Shi'i worldview based on the Qur'anic injunction in which the concept of wilaya occurs, the perspective sketched above on the leadership of the Muslim Ummah assumes a central position. The pertinence of the wilaya to the question of lawful and legitimate authority can be deduced in those sections of the Our'anic exegesis that deal with the passages on wilaya. The following verse of the Qur'an is regarded by Shi'i exegetes as the :most important reference to the wilaya

Only Allah is your Wali [guardian] and His Apostle and those who believe, who perform' (prayer and pay alms while they bow' (٥:٥٥). (١٠

This passage establishes the 'guardianship' of Allah, the Prophet, and 'those who believe.' The last phrase ('those who believe'), according to Shi'i commentators, refers to the (Imams whose wilaya is established through their designation by the Prophet.' (١١

The term al-wali, as it occurs in the above context, has been interpreted diversely by Sunni exegetes. Although there is a consensus among them that the verse was revealed in praise of Imam Ali's piety and devotion, the term al-wali has been interpreted as denoting muwalat ('befriending') of Imam Ali and not necessarily the acceptance of his (wilaya (authority, in the form of imama).(١٢

But Imami exegetes have taken the term in another of its primary significations, al-awla and al-ahaqq ('more entitled' [to exercise authority]), because al-awla in ordinary usage is often applied to a person who can exercise authority (al-sultan) or who has discretionary (power in the management of affairs (al-malik li al-'amr). (١٣

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Furthermore, al-wali, as it occurs in the above passage of the Qur'an, is unlikely to mean a person invested with wilayat al-nusra (the authority of 'backing'), because there are numerous explicit references to that effect in other verses of the Qur'an where believers are exhorted to back the religion of Allah by promulgating Allah's laws, a task in which the Prophet and the community of believers assist each other. (١۴)

Rather, al-wali, as applied to the Prophet, signifies a person who is invested with waliyat al-tasarruf, which means possession of the authority that entitles the wali to act in whatever way he judges best, according to his own discretion, as a free agent in the management of the affairs of the community. The wilayat al-tasarruf can be exercised only by one so designated by the wali al-mutlaq (the absolute authority) or by one who is explicitly appointed by someone in the position of al-wali bi al-niyaba (authority invested through deputization). Consequently, the Imam who is designated as wali by the Prophet possesses the wilayat al-tasarruf and is recognized as the ruler over the people.

This was the meaning of the term in the early usage of the Shi'i Imams. In a speech to the Umayyad troops who had come to intercept him on his way to Iraq, Imam Husayn ibn Ali explained to his adversaries the reason why he had refused to pay allegiance to the khalifah Yazid, son of Mu'awiya: 'We the family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) are more entitled (awla) to [exercise] the authority (wilaya) over you than those [who have taken it for themselves (i.e., the Umayyads). (١۵)

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Accordingly, tasarruf (discretionary authority) has been regarded as the primary and essential import of wilaya, especially as it is applied to Allah, the Prophet, and the Imams in the above passage. However, there exists a substantial differentiation in the way wilaya is apprehended in relation to Allah, the Absolute Authority (Al-Wali al-Mutlaq), on the one hand, and the Prophet and the Imams, the authority through deputization, on the other. When the Qur'an speaks about Allah being the Wali, it primarily signifies Wilayat al-Takwnil - the unconditional wilaya 'originating' in Allah, with absolute and all-encompassing authority and discretion over all that Allah has created. To this wilaya is sometimes appended wilayat al-Nusra, by means of which Allah helps the believers. Thus the Qur'an reads, 'Allah is the Guardian (Wali) of those who believe...Unbelievers have no guardian' (۴۷:۱۱).

Moreover, the Qur'an frequently speaks about Allah's wilaya in relation to the believers, by means of which Allah manages the affairs of the believers -- their guidance to the right path and assistance to them in obeying Allah's commandments: 'Allah is the Guardian (Wali) of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into the light' (۲:۲۵۷).

But when wall is used in relation to the Prophet, it is designated as al-wilayat al-i' tibariyya -- that is, 'relative' authority -- dependent upon Allah's appointing him in that position; or al-wilayat al-tashri'iyya, the religious-moral-legal authority invested in the Prophet to undertake the legislation and execution of the divine plan on earth. Thus, the Qur'an declares: 'The Prophet has a greater claim (awla) on the faithful than they have on themselves' (۳۳:۶). (۱۶)

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The wilaya of the Prophet over the believers is due to his being the Prophet of Allah. As such, the point of reference for his wilaya is, in actuality, the wilaya of Allah. It is for this reason that his wilaya is signified as 'relative' -- that is, accorded through designation as a mark of trust. In this sense, the Qur'an speaks of only one kind of wilaya -- Allah's wilaya -- which is the only fundamental wilaya. The wilaya of the Prophet and 'those who believe' ((i.e., in this context, the Imams) is dependent upon Allah's will and permission. (۱۷

It is because this wilaya was vested in them that the Prophet and the Imams had more right than other believers to exercise full authority, handing down binding decisions on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Muslim Ummah, and requiring complete .obedience to them- selves

The corollary of this wilayat al-tasarruf was the Shi'i belief that not only was the Imamate the continuation of the Prophethood, because of the authority vested in the Imams after the Prophet, but it also meant that the Imams were the sole rightful authority to lead the Ummah in establishing just public older. The Imams became the just ('adil) authority. In a case where the Imam's right to exercise his authority was usurped, the usurping .(authority was rendered illegal, and the ruler unjust (aI-ja'ir) and unrighteous (al-zalim

The above elucidation of the concept of wilaya in the context of the Qur'anic verse about :the 'trust' makes the following hadith reported by Shaykh Kulayni comprehensible

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Imam Ja'far Sadiq was asked by someone about the passage of the Qur'an that mentions the trust (amana) which Allah offered to humankind. The Imam said: 'This trust is the (wilaya of the Amirr al-Mumineen [Ali ibn Abi Talib]. (۱۸

The Imam's statement makes it clear that it was the act of accepting or rejecting the wilaya of Imam Ali that determined whether one had been faithful to the divine trust or not. The same act, moreover, determined the righteousness or unrighteousness of the ruling authority claiming to be legitimate. In Shi'ism, from its inception, the Imams not only possessed the wilaya to establish political authority on earth, they were also regarded as the sole legitimate authority who could and would establish Islamic public order. Imami works treating the theory of political authority unanimously maintained that an equitable government could not be established except by the one who is ma'sum -- that is, the infallible leader invested with the wilayat al-tasarruf to exercise discretionary control over the affairs of the Ummah. Furthermore, it was held that the process through which this authority becomes known to the public is explicit designation (nass) by the one possessing al-wilayat al- i'tibariyya -- the 'relative' authority derived through one's being .attributed to that office (e.g., Prophethood or Imamate) by Allah

Accordingly, in the Shi'i theory of political authority, power in the sense of authority, having moral and legal supremacy because of a'-wilayti al-tasarruf, with the right of enforcing obedience to Islamic ideology, can never be invested in a person without proper nass; and no government can become equitable (al-hukumal al-'adila) if it is not headed by al-sultan al-'adil, who is explicitly appointed by a legitimate authority like the Prophet. If a government is established without al-sultan al-'adil as its head, it is declared unjust and the ruler is al-sultan ja'ir. Moreover, because the tyrannical ruler, lacking the necessary al-wilayat al-tasarruf, has encroached upon the authority of the rightful waii .(al-'amr, he is also al-zalim (the oppressor

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Khulafa al-jawr or al-zalama is the title applied to these rulers under whom, according to the Shi'as, the world was filled with injustice. Disobedience to these unjust rulers was regarded as obedience to Allah. Thus, according to Mas'udi there were pious Muslims, not necessarily belonging to the Shi'a community, like Awn ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud during the Umayyad khilafah, who unheld the principle that anyone who opposes an unjust ruler (i.e., an Umayyad khalifah) was not devoid of divine guidance, but the unjust ruler was (devoid of it. (۱۹

It is perhaps significant that the terms mashru'iyya (legitimacy) or ghayr mashru'iyya (illegitimacy), to denote these two types of government in Islam, do not appear in the major works of Imami jurisprudence of the classical age. These terms, however, do appear in works of the Imamis who wrote during the Qajar period, when the question of the legitimacy of a Shi'i authority to exercise wilayat al-tasarruf during the occultation of the Twelfth Imam was being discussed. Thus, in his discussion about the necessity of government during the occultation, Muhammad Husayn Na'ini (d. ۱۹۳۶) uses the concept of 'legitimate' (mashru') government in connection with the constitutional authority (established by the approval of the righteous jurists. (۲۰

Notes

.Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi, Al-Masa'il al-Ha'iriyat, Najaf, ۱۹۶۹, pp ۳I۲-۳۱۳ (۴)

.Tusi, Tafsir al-Tibyan, Najaf, ۱۹۵۷, ۸/۳۶۸ (۵)

See also, Al-Fadl ibn al-Husayn al-Tabarsi, Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qu'ran, Beirut, (۶) .۱۳۷۹, ۸/۳۷۳-۳۷۴; Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf, ۳/۲۷۶-۲۷۷

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.Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Beirut, ١٩۶٠,۶/١٠ff (٧)

John wansborough, The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic (٨) Salvation History. Oxford, ١٩٧٨. has discussed the development of the practicaI application of the Qur'an during the process of community formation. In his section dealing with authority he describes the Islamic concept of authority as 'apostolic.' The charismatic figure of the Prophet is depicted therein in an essentially public posture in the .emergence of Islamic polity. see especially pp ٧٠-٧١

However, in the composition of Islamic salvation history, it was in Shi'ism that the (٩) wilaya of the Prophet, as I have elaborated in this paper, was repeatedly and consistently expressed by shi'i scholars; whereas in Sunnism the wilaya (authority in the form of exemplum [imam]) of the Prophet, in the absence of the charismatic authority following the death of the Prophet, came to be located in the Sunnah, which became the imam of .the community. See: Wansborough, Sectarian Milieu, PP ٧٠ff

.See Tusi, Tibyan, ٣/۵۵٩ (١٠)

Tusi, Tibyan, ٣/۵۶١; Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni, AI-Usul min al-Kafi, (١١) Tehran, ١٩۶۴, ٢/۴٠٢, hadith ٧٧; Tabataba'i, Mizan, ۶/ ١ff. 'Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din .Musawi, Al-Murji'at, Beirut, ١٩۶٣, p ١٨٠

See, for example, Tabari, Tafsir, ۶/١٨۶ff; Zamakhshari, Kashshaf, ١/۶٢٣-۶٢۴; Baydawi, (١٢) .Anwar, p ١۵۴

.Tusi, Tibyan, ٣/۵۵٩ (١٣)

See, for example, the Qur'an, ۴٧:٧, ٧:١۵٧, ۵٩:٨ See also Tabataba'i. Mizan, ۶/١٣; (١۴) .Tusi,Tibyan, ٣/۵۶۵, alludes to this

p: ٧٠

Tabari Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk, Cairo, ۱۹۶۲, ۵/۴۰۲. See also ۵/۳۵۷, where instead of (۱۵) awla, ahaqq is used to signify the same conclusion of being 'more entitled to tasrruf.' (۱۶) Awla in this verse has been translated by A J Arberry and others as 'nearer' and 'closer'.' But, taking into consideration the Prophet's speech on the occasion of theFarewell pilgrimage, where the same verse of the qur'an occurs in the form of a question by the Prophet to the Muslims, the implication is in the sense of being 'more entitled.' The Prophet asked the assembled pilgrims: 'who is more worthy [in the eyes of] the believers .than their ownselves?' see: fn ۱

Among the early works, besides the Qur'anic exegesis where wilaya occurs in (۱۷) themeaning of wilayat al-tasarruf, one can cite the Ikhtiyar ma'rifat al-rijal of Abu 'AmrUmar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Kashshi, especially where he mentions the wilaya of Abu al-Khattab, which was denounced by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq. See Rijal, Mashhad, ۱۳۴۸/۱۹۶۴, .۲۹۶,۵۲۳. Also, Tabataba'i's Mizan, ۶/۱۲-۱۴

.Kulayni, Kufi ۲/۳۶۸, hadith ۵۲ (۱۸)

Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Mas'udi Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawaher, Beirut ۱۹۶۶. (۱۹) ۳/۱۹۳ff. In a more explicit speech, Imam Husayn, on his way to Iraq, reminds the soldiers of the Umayyad commander who had come to arrest him that the Prophet had required the Muslims to challenge a sultan who had ruled unjustly. breaking all laws of Allah and .opposing the Sunnah of the Prophet. see Tabari, Ta'rikh, ۵,۴۰۳

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Al-Mirza Muhammad Husayn al-Na'ini, Tanbih al-Umma wa Tanzih al-Milla, Tehran, (٢٠) .١٩٥٥, p ١٥

Conclusion

By virtue of his being an infallible leader and authoritative interpreter of Islamic revelation through his designation to exercise al-wilayat al-tasarruf, the Imam is the sole .legitimate authority who could establish the Islamic public order

However, as historical circumstances unfolded, the Imamate became divided into .temporal and spiritual spheres

The temporalauthority of the Imam was regarded as having been usurped bythe ruling dynasty, but the spiritual authority remained intact inthe Imam who was regarded as Allah's (unanswerable)demonstration (of divine omnipotence) -- Hujjat Allah (lit. theproof .of Allah), empowered to guide the spiritual lives of his adherents as the true Imam

This spiritual authority was not contingent upon the Imam's being invested as the ruling authority (sultan) of the Ummah. Accordingly, the Imamate inthe form of religious leadership that began with the Prophet's proclamation about the wilaya of Imam Ali at Ghadir Khum in۶٣٢ AD continued through all the political circumstances until the last .(Imam, the Twelfth Imam al-Mahdi, went into occultation (٨٧۴ AD

It was during this period that questions regardingImami political authority during the absence of the Imam beganto be treated methodically, especially when, for the first time, following the last manifest Imamate of Imam Ali (۶۵۶-۶۶O AD), the temporal authority of the Shi'i Imami Buyid dynasty was established de facto. In view of the prolonged occultation of the Imam and the absence of special designation during this period, the Shi'is cholars in their works on jurisprudence reemphasized the separation between power (which could exact or enforceobedience) and wilaya (authority, which reserved the right todemand obedience, depending on legal-rational circumstances) that had existed even during the lifetime of the Imams. Only theinvestiture of authority and the assuming of political powercould establish the rule of justice and equity.However, delegation of the Imam's wilaya to an individual whocould assume both the authority and power of the Imam whenthe Imam in occultation could not monitor the exercise of that authority was

.dangerous

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This danger was perceived by some jurists, who, pending the return of the Twelfth Imam, ruled out the possibility of absolute claim to political power and authority (wilaya) resembling that of the Imam himself. Nevertheless, the rational need to exercise authority in order to manage the affairs of the Ummah was recognized and .authoritatively legalized

The establishment of the Shi'i dynasties during the occultation didnot change the basic doctrine of the Imami leadership whosedirection was set on the occasion of Ghadir Khum .by the Prophet

Chapter ٣

About the Author

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Orientalists and the Event of Ghadir Khum

The ١٨th of Dhil-Hijjah ١۴١٠ AH is to be celebrated in the Shi'i world as the ١,۴٠٠th anniversary of the declaration of Ghadir Khum in which the Prophet said the following :about Imam Ali

Whomsoever's master (mawla) I am, this Ali is also his master.'This event is of such a' .significance to the Shi'as that no serious scholar of Islam can ignore it

The purpose of this paper is to study how the event of Ghadir Khum was handled by the orientalists. By 'orientalists' I mean the western scholarship of Islam and also those .easterners who received their entire Islamic training under such scholars

Before proceeding further, a brief narration of the event of Ghadir Khum would not be out of place. This will be especially helpful to those who are not familiar with Ghadir Khum. While returning from his last pilgrimage, Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, received the following command of Allah: '٠ Messenger! Convey what had been revealed to you from yourLord; if you do not do so, then [it would be as if] you have not conveyed His message [at all]. Allah will protect you from the people' (۵:۶٧). Therefore he stopped at Ghadir Khum on Dhil-Hijjah١٨, ١٠ A.H. to convey the message to the pilgrims before they .dispersed. As it was very hot, a dais shaded with branches was contructed for him

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Then the Prophet gave a long sermon. At one point, he asked his faithful followers whether he, Muhammad, had more authority (awla) over the believers than they had over themselves; the crowd cried out: 'Yes, it is so, ۰ Apostle of Allah!' Then he took Ali by the hand and declared: 'Whomever's master (mawla) I am, this Ali is also his master'(Man kuntu mawlahu fa hadha Aliyiun mawlahu). Then the Prophet also announced his impending death and charged the believers to remain attached to the Qur'an and Ahl al-Bayt.

This summarizes the important parts of the event of Ghadir Khum. The main body of this paper is divided as follows:

Part II is a brief survey of the approach used by the orientalists in studying Shi'ism.

Part III deals with the approach used to study GhadirKhum in particular. Part IV is a critical review of what M AShaban has written about the event in his Islamic History AD۶۰۰-۷۵۰. This will be followed by a conclusion.

Shi'ism and the Orientalists

When the Egyptian writer, Muhammad Qutb named his book Islam: the Misunderstood Religion, he was politely expressing the Muslim sentiment about the way the orientalists have treated Islam and Muslims in general. The word 'misunderstood' implies that at least a genuine attempt was made to understand Islam. However, a more blunt criticism of orientalism, shared by the majority of the Muslims, comes from Edward said: 'The hardest thing to get most academic experts on Islam to admit isthat what they say and do as scholars is set in a profoundly, andin some ways an offensively, political context. Everything about the study of Islam in the contemporary west is saturated with political importance, but hardly any writers on Islam, whether expert or general, admit the fact in what they say. Objectivity is assumed to be inherent in learned discourse about other societies, despite the long history of political, moral and religious concern felt in all societies, western or Islamic, about the alien, the strange and the different. In Europe, for example, the orientalists have traditionally been affiliated directly with colonial offices.' (۱)

Instead of assuming that objectivity is inherent in learned discourses, the western scholarship has to realize that pre-commitmentto a political or religious tradition, on a consciousor subconscious level, can lead to biased judgement. As MarshallHudgson writes: 'Bias comes especially in the questions he posesand in the type of category he uses, where indeed, bias is especially hard to track down because it is hard to suspect the very terms one uses, which seem so innocently neutral...' (٢)

TheMuslim reaction to the image portrayed of them by the westernscholarship is beginning to get its due attention. In ١٩٧٩ thehighly respected orientalist Albert Hourani said: 'The voices ofthose from the Middle East and North Africa telling us that theydo not recognize themselves in the image we have formed ofthem are too numerous and insistent to be explained in terms ofacademic rivalry or national pride.' (٣)

This was about Islam andMuslims vis-a-vis the orientalists.However, when we focus on the study of Shi'ism by theorientalists, the word 'misunderstood' is not strong enough,rather it is an understatement. Not only is shi'ism misunderstood, it has been ignored, misrepresented and studied mostly through the here siographic literature of its opponents. It seemsas if the Shi'as had no scholars and literature of their own. To borrow an expression from Marx: 'They cannot representthemselves, they must be represented,' and that also by theiradversaries!The reason for this state of affairs lies in the paths throughwhich the western scholars entered the fields of Islamic studies.Hodgson, in his excellent review of western scholarship, writes:'First, there were those who studied the Ottoman empire, which played so major a role in modern Europe. They came to itusually in the first instance from the viewpoint of European diplomatic history. Such scholars tended to see the whole of Islamdom from the political perspective of Istanbul, the Ottoman capital. Second, there were those, normally British, who enteredIslamic studies in India so as to master Persian as good civil servants, or at least they were inspired by Indian interests. Forthem, the imperial transition of Delhi tended to be the culmination of Islamicate history. Third, there were the Semitists, often interested primarily in Hebrew studies, who were lured into Arabic. For them, headquarters tended to be Cairo, the mostvital of Arabic-using cities in the nineteenth century, though some turned to Syria or the Maghrib. They were commonly philogians rather than historians, and they learned to see Islamicate culture through the eyes of the late Egyptian and Syrian Sunni writers most in vogue in Cairo. Other paths -- thatof the Spaniards and some Frenchmen who

focused on the Muslims in Medieval Spain, that of the Russians who focused on the northern Muslims -- were generally less important.' (۴)

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It isquite obvious that none of these paths would have led westernscholars to the centres of Shi'i learning or literature. Themajority of what they studied about Shi'ism was channeled through non-Shi'i sources. Hodgson says: 'All paths were at one in paying relatively little attention to the central areas of the Fertile Crescent and Iran, with their tendency towards Shi'ism; areas that tended to be most remote from western penetration.' (٥)

And after the First World War, 'the Cairene path to Islamicstudies became the Islamicist's path par excellence, while otherpaths to Islamic studies came to be looked on as of more localrelevance.' (۶)

Therefore, whenever an orientalist studied Shi'ism throughUthmaniyyah, Cairene or Indian paths, it was quite natural forhim to be biased against Shi'i Islam. 'The Muslim historians ofdoctrine [who are mostly Sunni] always tried to show that all other schools of thought than their own were not only false but, if possible, less than truly Muslim. Their works describe innumerable "firqahs" in terms which readily misled modern scholars into supposing they were referring to so many "hereticalsects".' (٧)

And so we see that until very recently, western scholarseasily described Sunnism as 'orthodox Islam' and Shi'ism as a'heretical sect.' After categorizing Shi'ism as a heretical sect ofIslam, it became 'innocently natural' for western scholars to absorb the Sunni scepticism concerning the early Shi'i literature.Even the concept of taqiyya was blown out of proportion and itwas assumed that every statement of a Shi'i scholar had ahidden meaning. And, consequently, whenever an orientalist found time to study Shi'ism, his precommitment to the Judeo-Christian tradition of the west was compounded with the Sunnibias against Shi'ism. One of the best examples of this compounded bias is found in the way the event of Ghadir Khumwas approached by the orientalists.

p: ٧۶

.Edward w Said, Covering Islam, New York: pantheon Books, ۱۹۸۱, p xvii (۱

Marshall G S Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, vol ۱, Chicago: Universityof Chicago Press, (۲ .۱۹۷۴, p ۲۷

Albert Hourani, 'Islamic History, Middle Eastern History, Modem,' in M H Kerr (ed), (۳ .Islamic Studies: A tradition and its problems,California: Undena Publications, ۱۹۷۹, p ۱۰

.Hodgson, op. cit., pp ۳۹-۴O (۴

.Ibid.۶) Ibid (۵

.Ibid. pp ۶۶-۶۷ (۷

The Event of Ghadir Khum: From Oblivion to Recognition

The event of Ghadir Khum is a very good example to trace the Sunni bias which found its way into the mental state of the orientalists. Those who are well-versed with the polemic writings of Sunnis know that whenever the Shi'as present a hadith or a historical evidence :in support of their view, a Sunni polemicist would respond in the following manner

.Firstly, he will outright deny the existence of any such hadith or historical event

Secondly, when confronted with hard evidence from his own sources, he will cast doubt .on the reliability of the transmitters of that hadith or event

Thirdly, when he is shown that all the transmitters are reliably Sunni standards, he will give an interpretation to the hadith or the event which will be quite different from that of .the Shi 'as

These three levels form the classical response of the Sunni polemicists in dealing with the arguments of the Shi'as. Aquotation from Rosenthal's translation of Ibn Khaldun's The Muqadlimah would suffice to prove my point. (Ibn Khaldun is quoting the following part from Al-Milal wa al-Nihal, a heresiographic work of Ash-Sharistani.) According to lbn Khaldun, the Shi'as believe that: 'Ali is the one whom Muhammad appointed. The (Shi'a) transmit texts (of traditions) in support of (this belief)...Theauthority of the Sunnah and the transmitters of the religious law do not know these texts [۱]. Most of them arc

suppositions, or[٢] some of their transmitters are suspect, or [٣] their (true)interpretation (is very different from the wicked interpretation that (the Shi'a) give to them.' ٨

p: ٧٧

Interestingly, the event of Ghadir Khum has suffered the samefate at the hands of the orientalists. With the limited time and sources available to me at this moment, I was surprised to seethat most works on Islam have ignored the event of Ghadir Khum, indicating, by its very absence, that the orientalistsbelieved this event to be 'superstitious' and an invention of the Shi'as. Margoliouth's Muhammad the Rise of Islam (١٩٠٥), Brocke lmann's History of the Islamic People (١٩٣٩), Arnold and Guillaume's The Legacy of Islam (١٩٣١), Guillaume's Islam(١٩٥۴), von Grunebaum's Classical Islam (١٩۶٣), Arnold's The Caliphate (١٩۶٥) and The Cambridge History of Islam (١٩٧٠) have completely ignored the event of Ghadir Khum. Why did these and many other western scholars ignore the event ofGhadir Khum? Since western scholars mostly relied on anti-Shi'i works, they naturally ignored the event of Ghadir Khum.L Veccia Vaglieri, one of the contributors to the second edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam (١٩٥٣), writes:'Most of the sources which form the basis of our [orientalists']knowledge of the life of the Prophet (Ibn Hisham, Al- Tabari,Ibn Sa'd, etc) pass in silence over Muhammad's stop at Ghadir Khum, or, if they mention it, say nothing of his discourse (the writers evidently feared to attract the hostility of the Sunnis,who were in power, by providing material for the polemic of theShi'as who used these words to support their thesis of Ali's rightto the caliphate). Consequently, the western biographers ofMuhammad, whose work is based on these sources, equally makeno reference to what happened at Ghadir Khum.' ٩)

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Then we come to those few orientalists who mention the hadithor the event of Ghadir Khum but express their scepticism about its authenticity -- the second stage in the classical response of the Sunni polemicists.The first example of such scholars is Ignaz Goldziher, a highly respected German orientalist of the nineteenth century. He discusses the hadith of Ghadir Khum in his Muhammed anische Studien (١٨٨٩-١٨٩٠) translated in English as Muslim Studies(١٩۶۶-١٩٧١) under the chapter entitled 'The Hadith in its Relation to the Conflicts of the Parties of Islam.' Coming to theShi'as, Goldziher writes:'A stronger argument in their [Shi'a's J favour. ..was their conviction that the Prophet had expressly designated and appointed Ali as his successor before his death...Therefore the' Alid adherents were concerned with inventing and authorizing traditions which prove Ali's installation by the direct order of the Prophet. The most widely-known tradition (the authority of which is not denied even by orthodox authorities though they deprive it of its intention by a different interpretation) is the tradition of Khum, which came into being for this purpose and is one of the firmest foundations of the theses of the 'Alid party.' (١٠)

One would expect such a renowned scholar to prove how the Shi'as 'were concerned with inventing' traditions to support their theses, but nowhere does Goldziher provide any evidence.After citing AI-Tirmidhi and Al-Nasa'i in the footnote as the sources of hadith for Ghadir, he says: 'AI-Nasa'i had, as is well known,pro-'Alid inclinations, and also AI-Tirmidhi included in his collection tendentious traditions favouring Ali, e.g., the tayrtradition.' (١١)

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This is again the same old classical response of the Sunni polemicists -- discredit the transmitters as unreliable or adamantly accuse the Shi'as of inventing the traditions.Another example is the first edition of the Encyclopaedia ofIslam (۱۹۱۱-۱۹۳۸), which has a short entry under 'Ghadir Khum' by F Bhul, a Danish orientalist who wrote a biographyof the Prophet. Bhul writes: 'The place has become famous through a tradition which had its origin among the Shi'as but isalso found among the Sunnis, viz., the Prophet on journey back from Hudaybiyya (according to others from the Farewell Pilgrimage) here said of Ali: 'Whomsoever I am lord of, his lord is Ali also!' ۱۲)

Bhul makes sure to emphasize that the hadith and the event of Ghadir has 'its origins among the Shi'as'! Another striking example of the orientalists' ignorance about Shi'ism is A Dictionary of Islam (۱۹۶۵) by Thomas Hughes.Under the entry of Ghadir, he writes: 'A festival of the Shi'as onthe ۱۸th of the month of Zu 'l-Hijjah, when three images of dough filled with honey are made to represent Abu Bakr, Umarand Usman, which are stuck with knives, and the honey is sipped as typical of the blood of the usurping khalifahs. The festival is named Ghadir, 'a pool,' and the festival commemorates,if is said, Muhammad having declared Ali his successor at Ghadir Khum, a watering place midway between Makkah andal-Madinah.' ۱۳)

Coming from a Shi'i background of India,having studied in Iran for ۱۰ years and lived among the Shi'a ofAfrica and North America, I have yet to see, hear or read about the dough and honey ritual of Ghadir!! I was more surprised to see that even Vaglieri, in the second edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, has incorporated this rubbish into his fairly excellent article on Ghadir Khum. He adds at the end: 'This feast alsoholds an important role among the Nusayris.' It is quite possible that the dough and honey ritual is observed by the Nusayris; ithas nothing to do with the Shi'as. But do all orientalists know the difference between the Shi'as and the Nusayris? I very much doubt so.A fourth example from the contemporary scholars who have treaded the same path is Philip Hitti in his History of the Arabs(۱۹۶۴). Alter mentioning that the Buyids established 'the rejoicing on that [day] of the Prophet's alleged appointment of Ali ashis successor at Ghadir Khum,' he describes the location ofGhadir Khum in the footnote as 'a spring between Makkah andal-Madinah where Shi'ite tradition asserts the Prophet declared,"Whosoever I am lord of, his lord is Ali also". ۱۴)

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Athough this scholar mentions the issue of Ghadir in a passing manner, still he wants to leave his readers with the impression that the hadith of Ghadir is a 'Shi'ite tradition.'To these scholars who, consciously or unconsciously, have absorbed the Sunni bias against Shi'ism and insist on the Shi'iorigin or invention of the hadith of Ghadir, I would just repeat what Vaglieri has said in the Encyclopaedia of Islam about Ghadir Khum:'It is, however, certain that Muhammad did speak in this placeand utter the famous sentence, for the account of this event has been preserved, either in a concise form or in detail, not only by Al-Ya'kubi, whose sympathy for the 'Alid cause is well-known,but also in the collection of traditions which are considered as canonical, especially in the Musnad of Ibn Hanbal; and the hadiths are so numerous and so well attested by the different isnads that it does not seem possible to reject them.' ١٥)

Vaglieri continues: 'Several of these hadith are cited in the bibliography, but it does not include the hadith which, althoughreporting the sentence, omit to name Ghadir Khum, or those which state that the sentence was pronounced at al-Hudaybiyya.The complete documentation will be facilitated when the Concordance of Wensinck has been completely published. Inorder to have an idea of how numerous these hadiths are, it is enough to glance at the pages in which Ibn Kathir has collecteda great number of them with their isnads.'It is time the western scholarship made itself familiar with theShi'i literature of the early days as well as of the contemporary period. There is no need to wait for Wensinck's Concordance.The Shi'i scholars have produced great works on the issue of Ghadir Khum. Here I will just mention two of those. The first is 'Abaqat al-Anwar written in Persian by Allama Mir HamidHusayn al-Musawi (d ١٣٠۴ AH) of India. Allama Mir Hamid Husayn has devoted two bulky volumes (consisting of about١,٠٨٠ pages) on the isnad, tawatur and meaning of the hadith of Ghadir. The second is Al- Ghadir in ١١ volumes in Arabic byAllama Abdul Husayn al-Amini where he gives with full references the names of ١١٠ sahaba of the Prophet and also ٨۴tabi'un (disciples of the sahaba) who have narrated the hadith of Ghadir. He has also chronologically given the names of the historians, traditionalists, exegetists and poets who havementioned the hadith of Ghadir from the first until the fourteenth Islamic century.

p:٨١

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Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah, tr Franz Rosenthal, vol ۱, New York: Pentheon Books, (۸ .۱۹۵۸, p ۴۰۳. In Arabic, see vol ۱, Beirut: Maktatatul Madrasah, ۱۹۶۱, p ۳۴۸

.'Encyclopaedia of Islam, ۱۹۵۳, see under 'Ghadir Khum (۹

I Goldziher, Muslim Studies, tr Barber and stern, vol ۲, Chicago: Aldine Inc, ۱۹۷۱, pp ۱۱۲- (۱۰ .۱۱۳

.Ibid (۱۱

.'Encyclopaedia of Islam, ۱۹۱۱-۱۹۳۸, see under 'Ghadir Khum (۱۲

Thomas P Hughs, A Dictionary of Islam, New Jersey: Reference Book Publishers, ۱۹۶۵, (۱۳ .p ۱۳۸

.Philip K Hitti, A History of the Arabs, London: Macmillan co, ۱۹۶۴,p ۴۷۱ (۱۴

.'Encyclopaedia of Islam, ۱۹۵۳, see under 'Ghadir Khum (۱۵

Shaban His New Interpretation

Among the latest work by the western scholarship on the history of Islam is M A Shaban's Islamic History AD ۶۰۰-۷۵۰, subtitled' A New Interpretation,' in which the author claims not only to use newly discovered material but also to reexamine and reinterpret material which has been known to us for many decades. Shaban, a lecturer of Arabic at SOAS of the University of London, is not prepared to even consider the event of Ghadir Khum. He writes: 'The famous Shi'ite tradition that he [the Prophet] designated Ali as his successor at Ghadir Khum should not be taken seriously.' Shaban gives two 'new' reasons for not taking the event of Ghadir seriously:'Such an event is inherently improbable considering the Arabs' reluctance to entrust young untried men with great responsibility.Furthermore, at no point do our sources show the Madinan community behaving as if they had heard of (this designation.' (۱۶

p: ۸۲

Let us critically examine each of these reasons given by Shaban.(١) The traditional reluctance of the Arabs to entrust young men with great responsibility. First of all, had not the Prophet introduced many things to which the Arabs were traditionally reluctant? Was not Islam itself accepted by the Makkans very reluctantly? This 'traditional reluctance,' instead of being an argument against the appointment of Ali, is actually part of the argument used by the Shi'as. They agree that the Arabs were reluctant to accept Imam Ali as the Prophet's successor not only because of his young age but also because he had killed their leaders in the battles of Islam. According to the Shi'as, Allah also mentions this reluctance when after ordering the Prophet to proclaim Imam Ali as his successor ('٠ Messenger! Convey what had been revealed to you...'), He reassured His Messenger by saying that 'Allah will protect you from the people' (٥:۶٧). The Prophet was commissioned to convey the message of Allah,no matter whether the Arabs liked it or not.Moreover, this 'traditional reluctance' was not an irrevocable custom of the Arab society as Shaban wants us to believe. Jafry,in The Origin and Early Development of Shi'a Islam, says: 'Our sources do not fail to point out that, though the 'Senate'(Nadwa) of pre-Islamic Makkah was generally a council of elders only, the sons of the chieftain Qusayy were privileged to be exempted from this age restriction and were admitted to the council despite their youth. In later times, more liberal concessions seem to have been in vogue; Abu Jahl was admitted despite his youth, and Hakim ibn Hazm was admitted when hewas only ١٥ or ٢٠ years old.' Then Jafry quotes Ibn 'AbdRabbih: 'There was no monarchic king over the Arabs of Makkah in the jahiliyyah. So whenever there was a war, they took a ballot among chieftains and elected one as 'King,' were he a minor or a grown man. Thus on the day of Fijar, it was theturn of Banu Hashim, and as a result of the ballot Al-Abbas,who (was then a mere child, was elected, and they seated him on the shield.' (١٧

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Thirdly, we have an example in the Prophet's own decisions during the last days of his life when he entrusted the command of the army to Usama ibn Zayd, a young man who was hardly٢٠ years of age. (١٨)

He was appointed over the elders of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, and, indeed, many of the elders resented this decision of the Prophet. (١٩)

If the Prophet of Islam could appoint the young and untried Usama ibn Zayd over the elders of the Muhajirun, then why should it be 'inherently in probable' to think that the Prophet had appointed Imam Alias his successor?(٢) The traditional reluctance to entrust tried men with great responsibility. Apart from the young age of Imam Ali, Shaban also refers to the reluctance of the Arabs in entrusting 'untried men with great responsibility.' This implies that Abu Bakr was selected by the Arabs because he had been 'tried with great responsibilities.' I doubt whether Shaban would be able to substantiate the implication of his claim from Islamic history.One will find more instances where Imam Ali was entrusted bythe Prophet with greater responsibilities than Abu Bakr. ImamAli was left behind in Makkah during the Prophet's migrationto mislead the enemies and also to return the properties ofvarious people which were given in trust to the Prophet. ImamAli was tried with greater responsibilities during the early battlesof Islam in which he was always successful. When the declaration(bara'at) against the pagan Arabs of Makkah was revealed, firstAbu Bakr was entrusted to convey it to the Makkans, but later on this great responsibility was taken away from him and entrusted to Imam Ali. Imam Ali was entrusted with the cityand citizens of Medina while the Prophet had gone on the expedition to Tabuk. Imam Ali was appointed the leader of the expedition to Yemen. These are just a few examples which come to mind at random. Therefore, on a comparative level, Ali ibnAbi Talib was a person who had been tried and entrusted with greater responsibilities than Abu Bakr.(٣) The behaviour of the Medinan community about the declaration of Ghadir. Firstly, if an event can be proved as true by the accepted academic standards (of the Sunnis, of course),then the reaction of the people to that event is immaterial.Secondly, the same 'traditional reluctance' used by Shaban to discredit the declaration of Ghadir can be used here against his skepticism towards the event of Ghadir. This traditional reluctance, besides other factors which are beyond the scope oft his paper, (٢٠)

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can be used to explain the behavior of the Medinan community.Thirdly, although the Medinan community was silent during the events which kept Imam Ali away from the khilafah, there were many among them who had witnessed the declaration of Ghadir Khum. On quite a few occasions, Imam Ali implored the sahaba of the Prophet to bear witness to the declaration of Ghadir. Here I will just mention one instance which took place in Kufa during the khilafah of Imam Ali, ۲۴ years after the Prophet's death.Imam Ali heard that some people were doubting his claim of precedence over the previous khulafah, therefore, he came to a gathering at the mosque and implored the eyewitnesses of the event of Ghadir Khum to verify the truth of the Prophet's declaration about his being the lord and master of all the believers. Many sahaba of the Prophet stood up and verified the claim of Imam Ali. We have the names of ۲۴ of those who testified on behalf of Imam Ali, although other sources like the Musnad of Ibn Hanbal and Majma' as-Zawa'id of Hafiz al-Haythami put that number at ۳۰. Also bear in mind that this incident took place ۲۵ years after the event of Ghadir Khum,and during this period hundreds of eyewitnesses had died naturally or in the battles fought during the first two khulafah'srule. Add to this the fact that this incident took place in Kufa which was far from the center of the sahabas, Medina. This incident which took place in Kufa in the year ۳۵ A.H. has itself been narrated by four sahaba and ۱۴ tabi'un and has been recorded in most (books of history and tradition. (۲۱

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In conclusion, the behavior of the Medinan community after the death of the Prophet does not automatically make the declaration of Ghadir Khum improbable. I think this will suffice to make Shaban realize that his is not a 'new' interpretation; rather it exemplifies, in my view, the first stage of the classical response of the Sunni polemicists -- an outright denial of the existence of an event or a hadith which supports the Shi'i views-- which has .been absorbed by the majority of the western scholars of Islam

.M A Shaban, Islamic History AD ۶۰۰-۷۵۰, Cambridge: University Press, ۱۹۷۱, p ۱۶ -۱۶

S H M Jafry, The Origin and Early Development of Shi'a Islam, Qum: Ansariyan - ۱۷ .Publications, n.d., p ۲۲

M H Haykal, The life of Muhammad, tr Al-Faruqi (n.p., American Trust Publications, -'۱۸ .۱۹۷۶, p ۴۹۲

.See the Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd and other major works on seerah -۱۹

.For more details, see S S A Rizvi, Imamate, Tehran: WOFIS,۱۹۸۵, pp ۱۲۰-۱۲۱ -۲۰

For full references, see Al-Amini, Al-Ghadir vol ۱, Tehran: Mu'assatul Muwahhidi, ۱۹۷۶, -۲۱ .pp ۱۶۶-۱۸۶

Conclusion

In this brief survey, I have shown that the event of Ghadir Khum is a historical fact which cannot be rejected, and that in studying Shi'ism, the pre commitment to the Judeo-Christian tradition of the orientalists was compounded with the Sunni bias against Shi'ism. Consequently, the event of Ghadir Khum was ignored by most western scholars and .emerged from oblivion only to be handled with skepticism and reinterpretation

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I hope this one example will convince at least some western scholars to reexamine their methodology in studying Shi'ism,and instead of approaching it largely through the works of heresiographers like Ash-Sharistani, Ibn Hazm, Al-Maqrizi and Al-Baghdadi who present the Shi'as as a heretical sect of Islam,they should turn to more objective works of both the Shi'as as well as the Sunnis.The Shi'as are tired, and rightfully so, of being portrayed as a heretical sect that emerged because of the political and economic circumstances of the early Islamic period. They demand to represent themselves instead .of being represented by their adversaries

Chapter ۴

About the Author

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The Theological Aspects of Ghadir

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

All Praise and Glory belong to Allah, Lord of the universe and the Only True Sovereign. I praise Allah, and from Him do I crave support and guidance. And I seek refuge in Allah from the malice of my nafs and from any evil act; whomever Allah guides can never go .astray; and whomever is misguided by Allah is truly lost and can never find guidance

I testify that there is no god but Allah, the Only One, and He has no partner of any sort, and I testify that Muhammad is HisSlave and Messenger sent by Allah with total guidance and true faith so that he should proclaim it over all the other ideologies; and in this Allah .Himself is the Witness

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And peace and blessings of Allah be on our Leader and the Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, sent as a blessing to mankind,Muhammad (Abul-Qasim). And peace and blessings of Allah be on his progeny, the purified, just as Allah Himself has revealed in the Qur'an: 'Verily, Allah intendeth but to keep off from you(every kind of) uncleanliness, ۰ ye .(People of the House, and purify you (with) a thorough purification' (۳۳:۳۳

I thank Allah for making me into a Muslim and for HisBounteous Help, for indeed without His Bounteous Help thisarticle would not have been possible. I pray to Allah that Heguides us all and increases our faith and knowledge and brings about our death in no other state .except as Muslims. Amen

One of the most unique things in any aspect of Islamic theology is that its truth manifests itself in our daily lives. all that is required to see this is a little pondering. Take, for example, the theology expanded in the Qur'an that all things have their ownterm appointed. Thus, the Qur'an tells us: 'What! Reflect they not within themselves; (to see clearly that) created not Allah the heavens and the earth and what is between them two (except with truth, and for an appointed term?' (۳۰:۸

The principle - ajal, or more precisely, fi ajalin musammah --manifests itself very clearly in our daily lives. Thus we find thateverything around us has an appointed term of its own, .whether it belongs to the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdom

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With this principle, it becomes very interesting when we note that even prophethood had a life cycle of its own; for it started with Prophet Adam, upon whom be peace, and ended with the Seal of the Prophets, Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Indeed this aspect of prophethoodis popular with many Muslim thinkers and scholars of the past.Thus we are shown in one source, (۱) for example, that a Sufi :poet,Mahmud Shabistari, wrote in his book Gulshan-i-Raz, the following couplet in Farsi

Nabuwwat ra zuhur ra az Adam amad Kamalash dar wujud Khatam amad.' (The first' appearance of prophethood was in Adam and its perfection was in the Seal of the (.Prophets

We find in this couplet a reference pointing clearly to the life cycle prophethood went .through beginning with Adam and flowering with the Last Prophet

But this has posed a dilemma for mankind because while prophethood reached its optimum, the history of humanity has outlived the term of prophethood. Therefore, in the absence of future prophets, who should guide mankind? What ahout Allah's promise in the Qur'an to continue guiding mankind, for example: '... And if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance on them shall be no fear nor shall (they grieve.' (۲:۳۸

This dilemma for mankind is very serious as well as interesting. It is serious because without the guidance from Allah, the status of mankind would be such that it could not be salved. Mankind is already in a state of loss (۱۰۳:۲) and forgetfulness (۳۶:۷۸), most importantly he carries the burden of the trust and covenant with Allah (۷:۱۷۲-۱۷۳). The dilemma is also interesting because Allah's promise cannot fail and yet we clearly see that the term of prophethood ended with the Last Prophet. The Qur'an itself declares him the .('Seal of the Prophets' (۳۳:۴۰

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The truth of the matter is that the only answer to this dilemma is found in the episode of Ghadir Khum. Apart from providing a solution to this problem, Ghadir also charts once and for all a clear path for the guidance and salvation of mankind. Ghadir provides once and for all the "usul" of the only acceptable faith to Allah. This is a challenge the defense of which we find directly from the Qur'an, thus: 'The (only) faith before Allah is Islam' (۳:۱۹). And in another place: 'If anyone desires (to follow) a faith other than Islam, fa lan yuqbala minhu (never will it be accepted of him); and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of .(those who are lost' (۳:۸۵

Most importantly, the final revelation from Allah to the Prophet took place at Ghadir and the fate of the salvation of mankind is sealed in Islam. The revelation is clear and leaves no doubt about Allah's seal over Islam. 'This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your faith' (۵:۳). .Ghadir's theology is therefore very interesting and must be seen in its true perspective

Islam believes that all prophets were Muslims. (۲) By this doctrine, they gave a clear message to worship only One God, Allah. They each proclaimed their prophethood and they each warned about the impending Day of Judgement. Since the prophethood had not yet ended, they also declared about the advent of the final Prophet; (۳) with whom not only would end the prophethood but also, as is obvious, the process of revelation. Hence forth, there would be no revelation and no new scripture. The Qur'an, therefore, would be protected by Allah Himself so that no one would ever tamper with it. (۴) One reason for Allah's guarantee of the Qur'an's protection is that together with the 'Itrat of the Prophet, it would act as al-thaqal aI-akbar (the weightiest or the heaviest) force in guiding mankind in the absence of the Prophet. This is clear also from the hadith of Al-(Thaqalayn. (۵

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The prime duty of the 'Itrat of the Prophet would be to uphold the injunctions of the Qur'an and disallow any innovations or schisms in the Sunnah of the Prophet. (۶) The duty to uphold these would remain in the hands of an Imam who would be endowed with .'ilm and be appointed through the process of nass

Since humanity henceforth would be guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah under an Imam and since the immediate Imam after the demise of the Prophet would be Imam ali, upon whom bepeace, the Prophet has shown Imam Ali as his clear successor throughout his mission leading up to the event of Ghadir Khum. As we shall see, that in doing so, the .Prophet was clearly charting the principles of the Usul-e Din to be followed

There are several incidents recorded in all authentic sources --both Shi'i as well as Ahle Sunnat wa al-Jama'ah (Sunni) --where the Prophet advanced Imam Ali to indicate his wilaya over all others. This began immediately with the very first declaration of his prophethood to his near relatives. The events that led to the invitation to his near relatives are clear from all sources. Allah commanded the Prophet to warn the relatives. We know that he invited his relatives and warned them as commanded by Allah. The Prophet gave at that time, just as he was to do at Ghadir at the end of his mission, an eloquent khutbah (the theology of which we shall look at a little later) at the end of which .Imam Ali was advanced as his successor

p: ۹۱

It is also a fact that including the above incident, Muslims believe through authentic ahadith that the Prophet regarded Imam Ali as a companion who possessed nine other :excellent merits. These are

.Imam Ali was the first man to believe in Muhammad as the Prophet of Allah (۱)

When the Prophet received the command from Allah to leave Medina, Imam Ali (۲) .willingly risked his life by sleeping in his bed covered in the blanket used by the Prophet

Imam Ali together with Lady Fatimah and Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, peace be (۳) upon all of them, were under the blanket with the Prophet (۷) when Jibreel (Gabriel) brought the news and the Prophet recited the verse: 'Innama yuridu Allahuliyudhhiba 'ankumu rrijsa Ahlul Bayti was yutahhirukum tathira'('Verily, Allah intendeth but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanliness, ۰ ye People of the House, and purify you(with) .'(a thorough purification

During the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet said that hewould send to fight the enemies (۴) one whom Allah would not put to shame because he loved Allah and His Messenger. TheProphet called Imam Ali, and although Imam Ali had sore eyes, the Prophet applied saliva from his own mouth onto Imam Ali'seyes, prayed for him and handed him the flag. .Imam Alireturned from Khaybar victorious

The Prophet sent Imam Ali with the revealed verses from Surat al-Bara'a (al-Tawbah) (۵) to read to the infidels saying that only Imam Ali could convey the revelation because .Imam Ali was from him and he was from Imam Ali

p: ۹۲

In Medina, once the Prophet blocked all the doors opening into the Prophet's mosque (۶) except the door of Imam Ali. The Prophet also explained later from the pulpit that he did .things as commanded by Allah

The Prophet told Imam Ali that he (Ali) would be the guardian of all the believers, male (۷) .and female, after his (the Prophet's) demise

When the Prophet was leaving for the expedition of Tabuk,the Prophet asked Imam Ali (۸) to remain behind in charge of Medina. When Imam Ali showed a desire to accompany him (sothat he should get a chance to attain the status of shaheed [martyr) in the battle field), the Prophet said to Imam Ali: '۰ Ali, you are to me what Harun (Aaron) was to Musa .'(Moses).(The only difference is that) there will be no prophets after me

At Ghadir, the Prophet said clearly: 'Man kuntu mawlahu fahadho Aliyun mawlahu.' (of (۹) .'whoever I am the mawla, (this) Ali is his mawla

There are several other occasions where the Prophet clearly indicated the succession of (Imam Ali. (۸

The above incidents leave no doubt that the Prophet was already preparing the Ummah for the concept of imama under whom the Ummah would continue to receive guidance. From the merits discussed above, I shall now briefly discuss the last two (numbers ۸ and ۹). This is because the article has to be brief(but please see footnotes for additional .(reading material

It has been wrongly argued by some Muslims, as our sources show, (۹) that it was only once that the Prophet uttered the words indicating the status of Imam Ali as that of Harun (Aaron)except that there would be no prophets after him. The fact of the matter is that it was several times, and indeed at different occasions, the Prophet is shown to have uttered this status of Imam Ali. In fact, even Mu'awiya had reminded this hadith of the Prophet to someone who had asked him a question and Mu'awiya replied by asking him to seek the answer of such problems from Imam Ali because, as Mu'awiya said, even (Umaral-Khattab used to ask Ali for solutions to difficult problems. (۱۰

p: ۹۳

When the Prophet announced only the door of Imam Ali leading to the inside of the Prophet's mosque be left open to the exclusion of all other doors and explained from the pulpit that It was the command of Allah, the Prophet also added that Ali's position in relation to him was similar to Harun's with Prophet Musa (except that the prophethood will end with Muhammad).In a heart-rendering occasion when the Prophet was establishing the brotherhood between the Muhajirun: and the Ansar, on both occasions the Prophet reserved Imam Ali's brotherhood only for himself and said to him that his (Ali's) position with the Prophet was the same as Harun's position was with Prophet Musa except that there would certainly be no prophets after the prophethood of Muhammad. Imam Ali asked on that occasion,what then, would he inherit? The Prophet replied: 'What the prophets before me left as inheritance: the Book of their Lord and their own Sunnah and you will be with my daughter Fatimah in my castle in Paradise and you are my brother andmy associate.' Then the Prophet recited this verse from the Qur'an: 'And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury; (they will be) brothers (joyfully) facing each other on thrones (of dignity)' (۱۵:۴۷). (۱۱)

The above events, recorded in authentic Islamic sources, shouldleave no doubt in anyone's mind that the Prophet clearly showed that:

(۱) he was the Seal of the Prophets;

(۲) the guidance of mankind would still continue but in the person of Imam Ali who was endowed with 'ilm (۱۲) and was the foremost in all respects in the matters of faith;

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the Imam would inherit the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet with which he (۳) ;could continue to guide mankind

the guidance wouldcontinue in his 'Itrat as outlined in the hadith of al-Thaqalayn;and (۴)

the hadith of al-Thaqalayn clearly showed that the Qur'an and the Prophet's 'Itrat are (۵) inseparable and the guidance must he derived from both. In this regard, the Prophet's ahadith are clear and demand upon the believers neither to go ahead of the Imams for otherwise they would perish nor to lag behind the Imams for even then they would perish, and never to teach the Imams because the Imams would always he ahead in their knowledge (since they are the bearers of 'ilm-e ladunni and the hidden knowledge of the Qur'an). In this regard, the Prophet also prophesied that there would emerge misguided people who would try to corrupt Islam but there would also he in all generations true believers of his Ahl al-Bayt who would counteract such corruptions. The Prophet warned against choosing such Imams. The Ahl aI-Bayt, the Prophet said, are like the head of the body (the balanced head will always guide correctly) or like the eyes to the face because the face is guided only by the eyes. In another tradition, the Prophet has said that the Ahlal-Bayt are like the Ark of Noah. Those that embark on it are saved and those that reject it are destroyed. Also, in another tradition, they are like the 'Gate of Repentance' (.۱۳) of the Ban iIsrael; those who entered therein were forgiven by Allah

p: ۹۵

In this regard, an Imam of the Sunnis, Imam Shafe'i has made a clear point: 'When I saw people led astray by their beliefs in these a of error and ignorance, in the Name of Allah I boarded the ship of salvation, that is the Ahl al-Bayt of Mustafa, the Seal of Prophecy, and I caught hold of the Rope of Allah, that is their love as He commanded us to hold fast to (the Rope. (۱۴

Humanity, therefore, will not he left without guidance. The Qur'an's purity combined with the Imams' infallible guidance through their 'ilm-e ladunni will continue to guide mankind in the 'Itrat of the Prophet. In one of the most extra-ordinarytraditions the Prophet has said: 'Even if there was only one day left for the world to end, Allah will extend that day until there will emerge a man whose name will be my name and whose family will be my family so that he will fill the earth with justice and equity just as it is filled with tyranny and (wickedness.' (۱۵

The above hadith also makes clear that the world itself has a term (ajal) and it will come to an end one day. Until such time the Prophet had left a clear guidance he showed both in the very first khutbah he gave to his relatives and also at Ghadir. It is interesting to look at both these sermons of the Prophet to see a clear thesis in which the Prophet has charted a path for mankind to follow once and for all. Thus, when the Prophet called his relatives, he clearly established the Usul of our faith. These principles manifested beautifully in his .sermon at Ghadir as well. I shall now turn to both these sermons and end my article

p: ۹۶

Like his khutbah at Ghadir, his first khutbah is also famous and is recorded in many books. The Prophet said:'(۰ my relatives, you know that) indeed the leader of the caravan would never betray the people of his own caravan. By Allah, even if I could lie to all mankind I would never lie to you(since you are my very own); and even if I could betray all mankind never would I betray you. I swear by Allah except whom there is no other God (Tawhid) that indeed without any doubt, I am the Prophet unto you particularly and to mankind generally (Nabuwwah). By Allah you will all die just as you sleep every night. Then you will get up (from your graves) just as you get up every day (from your beds) (Qiyamah); and without any doubt, an account will be taken from you for your deeds and you will be awarded with rewards for the good (you did) and be retributed for the evil you did' (Adalah). Then he asked, 'So let me know which of you is willing to assist me in this task and to share my burden, so that he may become my brother and the executor of my will (and my successor among you?' (Imama

As we know, it was Imam Ali who stood up and said, '۰Prophet of Allah, I will share this burden of yours.' As we readfrom the accounts, the Prophet placed his hand on the neck of Imam Ali and said: 'This is my brother and the executor of mywill and my successor .'among you. So listen to him and obey him

p: ۹۷

Thus began the mission of the 'Seal of the Prophets.' As we have already seen Imam Ali played an important role in the Seerah of the Prophet and one day as the Prophet had finished his final Hajj and was returning to Medina, Allah commanded him to proclaim the message. The Prophet must have felt the urgency of it because the command was 'if thou didst it not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission...' (۵:۶۷). The Prophet halted the caravan. People who were ahead were recalled. The multitude gathered and a quick pulpit was erected.This place was also the junction where people could depart to got o their own towns and therefore was the ideal place for all tolisten to what the Prophet had to say for the final time. The zuhr prayers were performed in congregation, after which the Prophet climbed up the pulpit (some sources say it was made from the saddles of camels). Here the Prophet began his most eloquent khutbah in which we see amazing resemblances of his very first khutbah as far as the usul of our faith are concerned. With this khutbah he asked the multitude to testify that he did deliver the message and thus completed his mission. The Prophet began by praising Allah and :said

All praise belongs to Allah. In Him do I put my faith and from Him do I crave support. Him' do I trust and His protection (doI) seek against the malice of our souls and the evils of our deeds.The misguided have no guide except Him, and those who are guided by Him can never go astray. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Him and .'that I, Muhammad,am His Slave and Messenger

p: ٩٨

Then he said that Allah had already informed him that the days of his life were coming to an end. He said: 'But you and I, eachone of us must answer unto Allah for all the things '?that are due from us. What then do you say

The multitude witnessed this to be so. Then the Prophet asked the multitude if they would also witness that Allah is One, and that he is His Apostle who is speaking to them on His command and the Resurrection and Judgement, Heaven and Hell and the Life Hereafter .are all certainties. The multitude again witnessed

The Prophet continued: 'Now then, listen to me carefully, for I have been commanded to tell you that I will be taken away from your midst, but I leave with you as my legacy (for the whole Ummah) two most important things, namely, the Book of Allah(the Qur'an) and my descendants, the Ahl al-Bayt. Never shall they be separated from one another, and so long as you adhere to both of them you will never be led astray after me. Therefore,٠ people, this is my last will and testament unto you that you should always remain faithful to the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Baytas true Muslims until death. Do not lag too far behind them and do not walk ahead of them, for either way you will go astray.But follow them and walk in their footsteps and they will guide you along the Straight Path (Sirat ul- .('Mustaqim

The Prophet then asked the multitude if he was not more worthy of their obedience than .'their own souls. And themultitude replied: 'Yes, verily, yes, ٠ Prophet of Allah

p: ٩٩

The Prophet then lifted Imam Ali and showing him to all side she said: 'Of whomever I am .'the mawla, (this) Ali is his mawla

Then he asked the multitude if he had truly and faithfully delivered the message. The .'multitude replied again: 'Yes, verily,yes, ، Prophet of Allah

So then, the Prophet said another important statement: 'Let those who are present here .'convey to those who are absent

Now if we ponder over this khutbah and compare it with the very first khutbah, we find to our amazement a clear chart of ourUsul and also a clear path for humanity to follow to .the end of the term of the human cycle

The Prophet asked the multitude in this khutbah to witness the Unity of Allah (Tawhid). Then he told them they will heaccountable to Allah (Adalah). Then he asked them if he was not the Apostle of Allah (Nabuwwah). Then the Prophet proclaimed Imam Ali as the mawla of all (Imama). Then he asked them to witness that the Resurrection, Judgement, .(Heaven and Hell and the life Hereafter are undoubted certainties (Qiyamah

And lastly, he asked the multitude to proclaim this message to all. clearly this is the duty of Muslims in all generations becausethe Qur'an calls us the khayr al- Ummak, that is, the best ones ofthe Ummah because Muslims are the holders of the truth. Weare the khayr al- Ummah so we should guide mankind towardssalvation for there will be no more prophets but we have theQur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt. With these two weights we canbalance ourselves perfectly because just as we are the khayral-Ummah, the Qur'an tells us that we are also the Ummatanwasatan, that is, the balanced Ummah. We are the Ummah of theProphet whom Allah described as the Rahmatun lil alamin(Mercy to the .(worlds

p: ۱۰۰

We have yet to bring Ghadir in its proper meaning in ourUmmah. The guidance, however, .has never stopped

Notes

Syed Hosein Nasr, Ideals and Realities of Islam, Boston: George Allen Urwin Beacon (۱ .Press, ۱۹۶۶, p ۶۸

Our discussion in this article makes this theology very clear. Islam reached its flowering (۲ in Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace.All the prophets that preceded him were Muslims, The Qur'an testifies this for each prophet. See for example the discussion .Prophet Yaqub (Jacob)had with his sons in the Qur'an -- ۲:۱۳۱-۱۳۲. Also see ۲:۱۳۰

See for example ۶۱:۶ where Prophet Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus) gives glad tidings 'of an (۳ aposde to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad(i.e., the 'Praised one,' Muhammad). It must be said that such prophecies are seen both in the Taurat (Torah) as well as the Injil (Gospel). see for example, Deuteronomy ۱۸:۱۸ and the Gospel of John ۱۴:۱۶, .۱۵:۲۶ and ۱۶:۷

See ۱۵:۹ -- 'Undoubtedly We (Allah) have sent down the Message (Qur'an) and (۴ assuredly We will guard it (forever).' This guarantee has already withstood the test of time because in the last two hundred years several attempts have been made to distort not only the Qur'an but all revealed scriptures from Allah. The Qur'an is the only scripture .that remains totally unaltered and is presented exactly as it was revealed

The actual wording of this hadith is as follows: 'Inni Tarikun fikumu al-thaqalayn, al- (۵ thaqal al-akbar Wa al-thaqal al-asghar. Faamma al-akbar fa Kitabu Rabbiy wa amma al-thoqal al-asghar fa 'ItratiAhli Boytiy fahfizuni fihima falan tadallu ma tamassak tumbihima.' (I am leaving behind you the two weights, the greater and the lesser. As for the greater, it is the Book of my Lord and as forthe lesser, it is my progeny, the People of my House. Guard Well my memory through the two weights! You will not go astray as long as you hold fast to both of them.') (AI-Ayyashi, Abu al-Nasr Muhammad ibn Mas'ud ibn Ayyash al-Sulami al-Samarqandi, Kitab Tafsir, edited by Hashim al-Rasuli al-Mahallati, .(vol ۱, p ۵

p: ۱۰۱

We see both these principles clearly applying in the lives of the Twelve Imams. Many of (۶ the sermons of Imam Ali in Nahjul blaghahwarn about innovations in religion and abandoning the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. we also see that in the shura of Umaral-Khattab, Imam Ail refused to accept the khilafah if it went beyond following the Qur'an and the of the Sunnah We find thiswas also the first condition Imam Hasan laid in .his treaty with Mu'awiya

In the episode of Hadith-e Qisa' reported widely in authentic Islamic sources of all (۷ .schools of thought

One occasion that I am very tempted to include in this article is the revelation of ۵:۵۵ (۸ recorded in the Qur'an. This was the occasion when Imam Ali gave away a ring from his from his finger to a beggar who had entered the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. The ring was given in the state of occasions (rukuh). The exegetes tell us that the Prophet, pleaed at Imam Ali's action, made a du'a to Allah to strengthen his back and appoint Imam Ali as his successor just as Allah had strengthened the back of Prophet Musa (Moses) by appointing for him Harun (Aaron), his brother. The exegetes tell us that hardly had the Prophet completed this du'a when this revelation descended: 'verily your wali is (none other except) Allah and His Apostle and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay zakat (poor-rate), while (even though) they be in occasions.' For Propher Musa's .du'a please see ۲۰:۲۹-۳۲ and ۲۰:۳۶

p: ۱۰۲

.see for example AI-Muraji'at (translated in Englkish as The Right Path),p ۱۷۱ff (۹

Allama Sharifuddin quotes this from Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Musnad. Also see The Right (۱۰ .Path, p ۱۷۸ff

.See The Righi Path, p ۱۹۳ (۱۱

In a popular hadith from the Prophet he said: 'Ana medina tu al 'iImi Wa 'Aliyyun (۱۲ .'.(babuha' ('I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its door

This is a references to the Qur'an ۲:۵۷-۵۸. The Bani Israel were given security in the (۱۳ town of plenty by Allah. They were asked to enter the gate with humility seeking forgiveness from Allah they would be forgiven. The Bani Israel instead changed the special word given them to ask forgiveness as they passed through the gate. As a result Allah sent plagues upon them from heaven because ' they infringed (Allah's commands) .'repeatedly

Allama sharifuddin has quoted this from Rishfat al-saadi Imam Abu Bakr ibn (۱۴ .shahabuddin. See also The Right Path, p ۴۰

Syed Haydar al-Amuli, Jami al-Asrar wa Manba' al-Anwar, p ۱۰۲. The explanation (۱۵ given to this hadith is that 'filling the earth with justice' means that he (Imam Mahdi) will bring about the rule of Allah (Tawhid) -- i.e., the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet -- .in place of polytheism -- i.e., shirk and corruption

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities in .religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes .of people interested in reading, with various formats in the cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems, web- kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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